TALES FROM THE TOMB

AUGUST
1971
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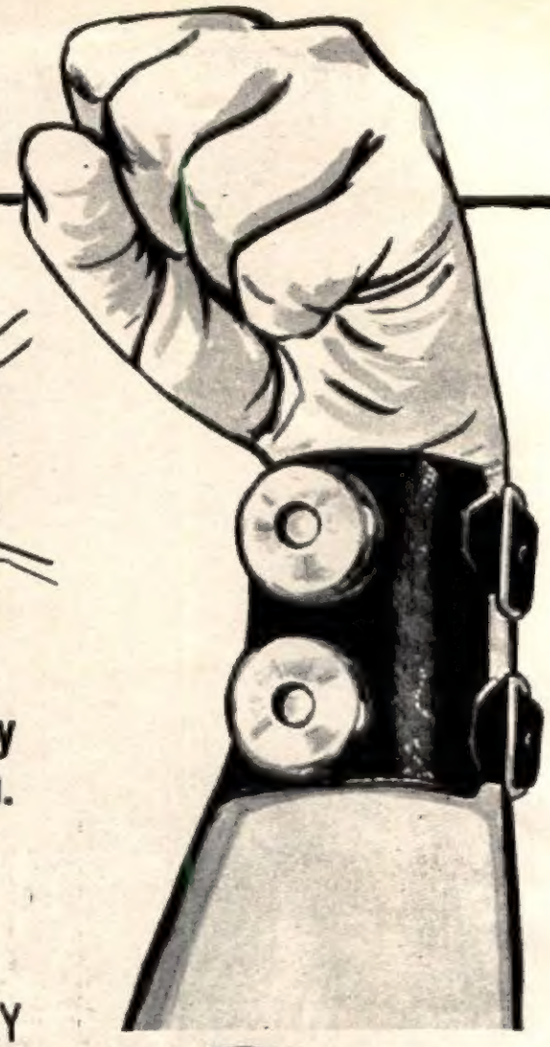

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TALES FROM THE TOMB

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CARL BURGOS, Editor — IRVING FASS, Art Director
EZRA JACKSON, Art Editor

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THE SEA MONSTERS

THE STRANGE TALE OF THE AQUATIC MAMMALS THAT APPEAR TO BE HALF MAN AND HALF FISH!

FROM OUT OF THE OCEAN DEPTHS THEY SURGED, SCREAMING THEIR HIDEOUS CRIES OF WRATH... BUT EXPLORER PAUL RAYMOND GRIMLY GUNNED HIS CRAFT DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE WHIRLPOOL! HIS POSSESSION WAS THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC FIND OF ALL TIME AND NOT EVEN THE HALF-HUMAN CREATURES OF THE SARGASSO SEA CAN STOP HIM NOW!!!

IN THE LIBRARY OF THE EXPLORER'S CLUB, PAUL RAYMOND SPEAKS WITH HIS ASSOCIATES!
IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC BETWEEN 20°-35° NORTH AND 30°-70° WEST ARE THE GREAT, WATERY WASTES OF THE SARGASSO SEA!
HMPH! A MASS OF SEAWEED AND TREACHEROUS WHIRLPOOLS!

NONSENSE! WE KNOW WHAT GREAT MIRACLES OF NATURE ARE THERE! I BEG OF YOU... HELP ME FORM JUST SUCH AN EXPEDITION!
PAUL... TRY TO BE SENSIBLE!

...THERE'S NOTHING BUT MILES OF THE SEAS! WASTE IN THE SARGASSO SEA!
COWARDS! COWARDS!

I'LL GO MYSELF! IF I CAN'T HAVE YOUR MONEY AND SUPPORT, I'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY!

A WEEK LATER, CAPTAIN BLAINE OF WHALER 11 MAKES A STRANGE ARRANGEMENT...
WITHIN FIFTY MILES OF THE SARGASSO SEA, CAPTAIN, SET ME ADRIFT IN YOUR POWER LAUNCH THERE!
HMM! SO YOU REQUEST THAT I STOP FOR ONLY TWENTY FOUR HOURS ON MY WAY BACK TO PICK YOU UP! BUT IF YOU ARE NOT THERE, I WILL NOT WAIT!

YOU ARE A MADMAN, MR. RAYMOND! BUT MONEY IS MONEY!
OF COURSE! I WILL SUPPLY ALL GAS AND PROVISIONS FOR THE LAUNCH! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!

THUSLY, WHEN THE WHALING VESSEL HAS CRUISED DEEP INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TOWARD THE HUNTING GROUNDS...
THERE'S YOUR ACCURSED SARGASSO SEA, MR. RAYMOND! REMEMBER, I WAIT ONLY ONE DAY FOR YOU!
YES, CAPTAIN! IT'S INTRIGUING! A MYSTIC SEA SWAMP! WHO KNOWS WHAT SECRETS ARE LOCKED IN ITS DEPTHS?

BEST OF LUCK, MR. RAYMOND!
THANK YOU...

BUT, I'LL NEED A MATE ON THIS TRIP... AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE IT!
WHA--? HE'S KNOCKED JOHNSON OVER THE HEAD!

COME BACK, YOU SWINE! I'LL HAVE YOU JAILED FOR THIS!
FOLLOW ME IN IF YOU DARE, CAPTAIN!

PAUL RAYMOND GUIDES HIS LAUNCH THROUGH THE MAZE OF EERIE WEEDS!
THE GUARD I PUT ABOUT THE PROPELLER IS KEEPING THE WEEDS FROM TANGLING IN HER!
OH-H-H. W-WHAT HAPPENED?

AS THE TWO MEN ARGUE, THEY ARE BEING WATCHED BY UNSEEN THINGS!
YOU SHANGHAIED ME INTO THE SARGASSO SEA! I OUGHT TO KILL YOU, RAYMOND!
DON'T BE A FOOL, JOHNSON! WE NEED EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE!

SUDDENLY...
YIIII! A MONSTER WHIRLPOOL! L-LOOK! THERE IN THE WATER!
W-WATER CREATURES! YOU'VE DOOMED US BOTH!

ROUND AND ROUND THE CRAFT SPINS, HELPLESS IN THE MONSTER WHIRLPOOL!
YAAA! I'M BLACKING OUT!
M-MERCY.. M-MERCY!

AN ENDLESS HOUR OF TORMENT DRAINS THE TWO MEN... THEN...
W-WE'RE STILL ALIVE! GREAT HORRORS!! MR. RAYMOND... MR. RAYMOND!

I-IT CAME OUTA THE WATER!
GREAT HEAVENS!! THE THING SEEMS TO BE HALF FISH--A-AND HALF MAN! BACK IN THE CABIN...QUICK!

BULLETS DON'T PIERCE ITS SCALES! OUT THROUGH THE HATCH, JOHNSON!

T-THAT OCEAN LINER! IF WE GET THERE WE MIGHT HOLD THAT CREATURE OFF!
IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

SUDDENLY...
ARRRGH!
ARRRCKR!
SEIZE THEM!

YAH-HHH!
YAA-A!

THROUGH THE MURKY WATERS, THE TERRIFIED MEN ARE TOWED BY THE AQUA-HUMANS...
THEY'RE TAKING US TO THE LINER...
I-IT'S THE JUPITER, IT VANISHED AT SEA TEN YEARS AGO!

WITHIN THE DERELICT LINER, PAUL RAYMOND AND HIS MATE GAZE UPON AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT...

W-WHAT MANNER OF CREATURES ARE YOU? W-WE MEAN NO HARM!

YO SHOULD NOT HAVE INVADED OUR WORLD! I AM CARPO THE RULER HERE!

YOU SPEAK ENGLISH? HOW CAN THAT BE? A-ARE YOU CREATURES OF THE SEA...OR HUMANS?

CENTURIES AGO MARINERS LOST IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF THE SARGASSO SURVIVED! THEY LIVED FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE VESSELS DOOMED HERE! WE ARE THEIR DESCENDANTS...

G-GOOD HEAVENS! YOUR BODIES CHANGED OVER THE CENTURIES... MAKING YOU HALF AQUATIC, HALF HUMAN!

BUT WHAT OF US?

IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE! WE MUST GET OUT OF HERE!

THERE'S NO RETURN FROM SARGASSO CITY! COME...

HENCEFORTH, THIS SHALL BE YOUR HOME! A THOUSAND VESSELS FILLED WITH THE FOODS AND COMFORTS OF HUMANS TO ENJOY! IN TIME YOU WILL BECOME ONE OF US!

NO! NO!

PT5

DOOMED, THE PAIR ARE LED TO THEIR QUARTERS...

YOU WILL BE FREE TO ROAM! NO ONE CAN SWIM OUT THROUGH THE SARGASSO WHIRLPOOL... THERE IS NO ESCAPE!

A P.T. BOAT...

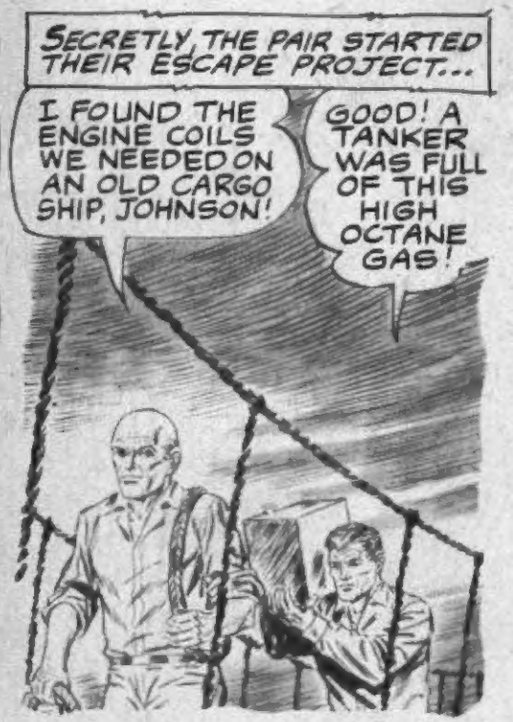
PT5

NOW WE'RE STUCK HERE! AND HE SAID WE WILL ONE DAY BECOME ONE OF THEM!

TRY TO KEEP YOUR WITS! I'M AS ANXIOUS TO GET OUT AS YOU ARE!

I WAS AN OFFICER ON ONE OF THESE P.T. BOATS! IT HAS THE MOTOR THAT COULD POSSIBLY TAKE US THROUGH THAT WHIRLPOOL!
...BUT HALF THE MACHINERY IS BROKEN OR MISSING!

YES, BUT I KNOW MARINE ENGINES AND THERE ARE ENOUGH VESSELS IN THIS WATERY GRAVE TO REPLACE THE PARTS WE NEED!
HEY... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S GO!


SECRETLY, THE PAIR STARTED THEIR ESCAPE PROJECT...
I FOUND THE ENGINE COILS WE NEEDED ON AN OLD CARGO SHIP, JOHNSON!
GOOD! A TANKER WAS FULL OF THIS HIGH OCTANE GAS!

LOOK OUT! DUCK!
CARPO!

DAY AFTER DAY THEIR LABOR CONTINUES...
ALMOST DONE, JOHNSON! ANOTHER HOURS WORK TOMORROW AND WE'LL BE READY FOR THE BREAK THROUGH BACK TO CIVILIZATION!
YIII! YOUR BACK, RAYMOND! YOUR BACK!

M-MY CHEST! SOMETHING LIKE GREEN MOSS GROWING ON IT!
STEADY, JOHNSON! IT'S HAPPENING! WE'RE... TURNING INTO AQUATIC CREATURES!

THE NEXT DAY...
WHAT A MIRACLE OF SCIENCE! I MUST BRING ONE OF THEM BACK AS PROOF! I MUST!
PT

OOOF!
WHA...?

YOU CRAZY? YOU GONE OUTA YOUR HEAD?
START THE ENGINE, JOHNSON! I'M BRINGING BACK A SAMPLE! QUICK!

FULL THROTTLE! WE'LL NEED EVERY OUNCE OF POWER THIS VESSEL HAS!
THEY'VE SPOTTED US! LOOK!
ARRRCKKK!
ARRRCK!
PT3

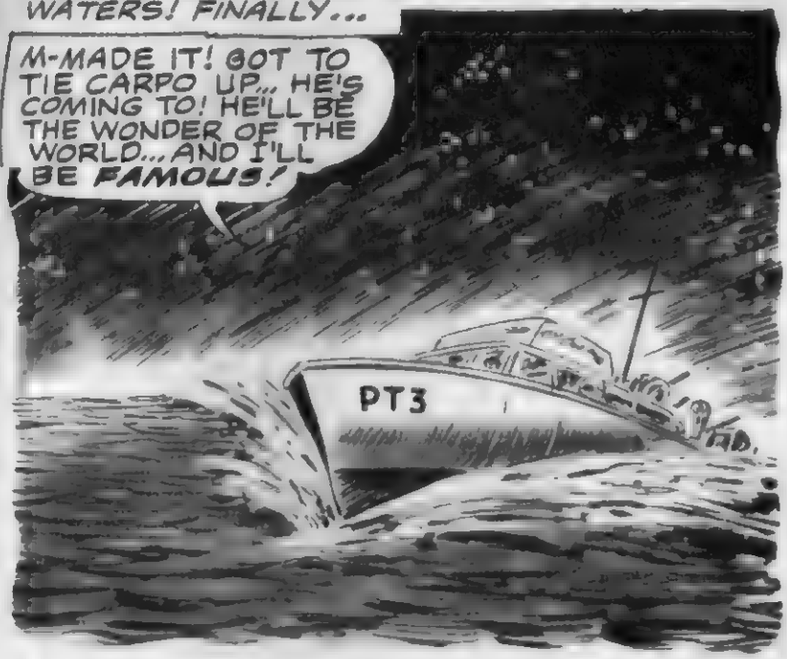
THEY WANT THEIR LEADER! THROW CARPO OVER THE SIDE, RAYMOND! HURRY!
NO! NO! I'VE GOT TO RETURN WITH HIM!
P

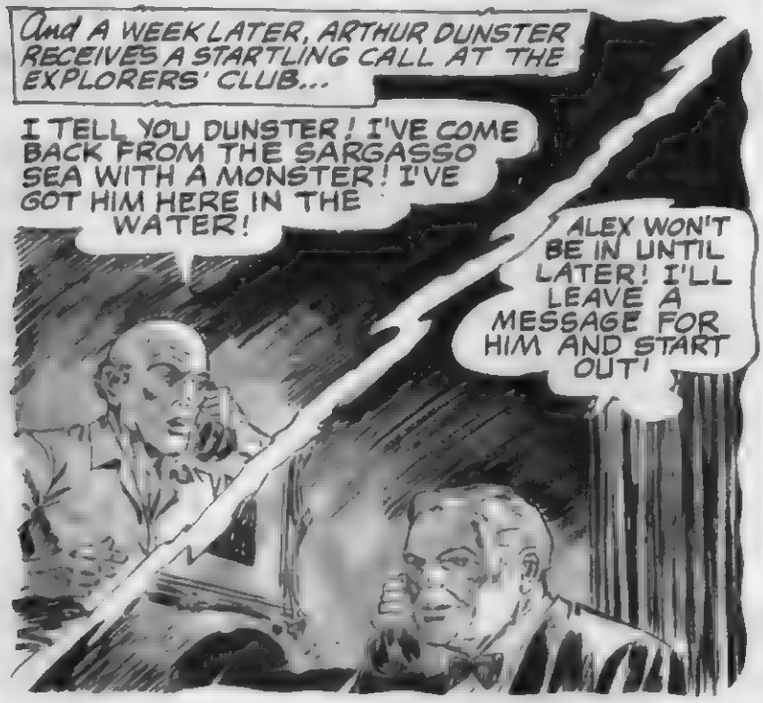
YOU BLASTED FOOL! I'LL THROW HIM IN MYSELF!
DON'T, JOHN! DON'T TOUCH IT OR I'LL KILL YOU!

SUDDENLY...
YAA!
GREAT SCOTT!

YIIIIII!
JOHNSON! JOHNSON!

THEN, THE RAGING WATERS OF THE WHIRLPOOL CLUTCH THE VESSEL...
I'VE LEFT THEM BEHIND.. NOW I'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH THE WHIRLPOOL...


THE DESPERATE MAN BATTLES THE UNEARTHLY WATERS! FINALLY...
M-MADE IT! GOT TO TIE CARPO UP... HE'S COMING TO! HE'LL BE THE WONDER OF THE WORLD... AND I'LL BE FAMOUS!
PT3


And A WEEK LATER, ARTHUR DUNSTER RECEIVES A STARTLING CALL AT THE EXPLORERS' CLUB...
I TELL YOU DUNSTER! I'VE COME BACK FROM THE SARGASSO SEA WITH A MONSTER! I'VE GOT HIM HERE IN THE WATER!
ALEX WON'T BE IN UNTIL LATER! I'LL LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR HIM AND START OUT!

SOON, DUNSTER ARRIVES AT HIS COLLEAGUE'S SHORE HOUSE...
NOW, PAUL, WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS ALL ABOUT? DO YOU REALIZE THE AUTHORITIES ARE SEEKING YOU OUT FOR KIDNAPPING? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR SKIN?
NO MATTER! I'VE UNCOVERED A SCIENTIFIC MIRACLE!

GOOD GRIEF!
I FOUND HIM IN THE SARGASSO SEA... A RULER OF AQUATIC CREATURES, HALF MAN-- HALF FISH!

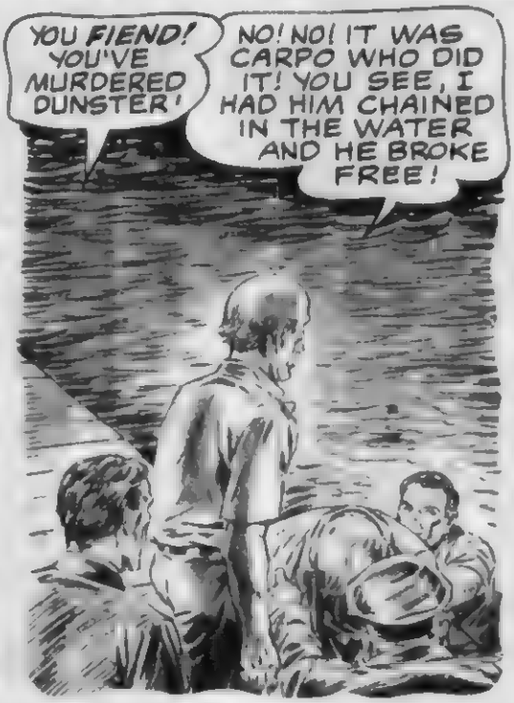
SUDDENLY...
ASTONISHING... WHA...?
DUNSTER! LOOK OUT!

YOU WERE A FOOL TO HAVE DEFILED THE SECRET OF THE SARGASSO!
STOP! STOP, CARPO!

YOUR OWN KIND WILL PUNISH YOU FOR THIS EVIL! FAREWELL!
NO! DON'T! COME BACK! YOU'VE GOT TO BE SHOWN TO THE WORLD!

THERE HE IS!
I'VE LOST HIM... LOST HIM!

PAUL! THE POLICE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU! I HAD TO INFORM THEM... GREAT HANNAH! Y-YOUR FACE!
I'VE BEEN TO THE SARGASSO SEA, ALEX! I CAPTURED A CREATURE THERE!
LOOK!

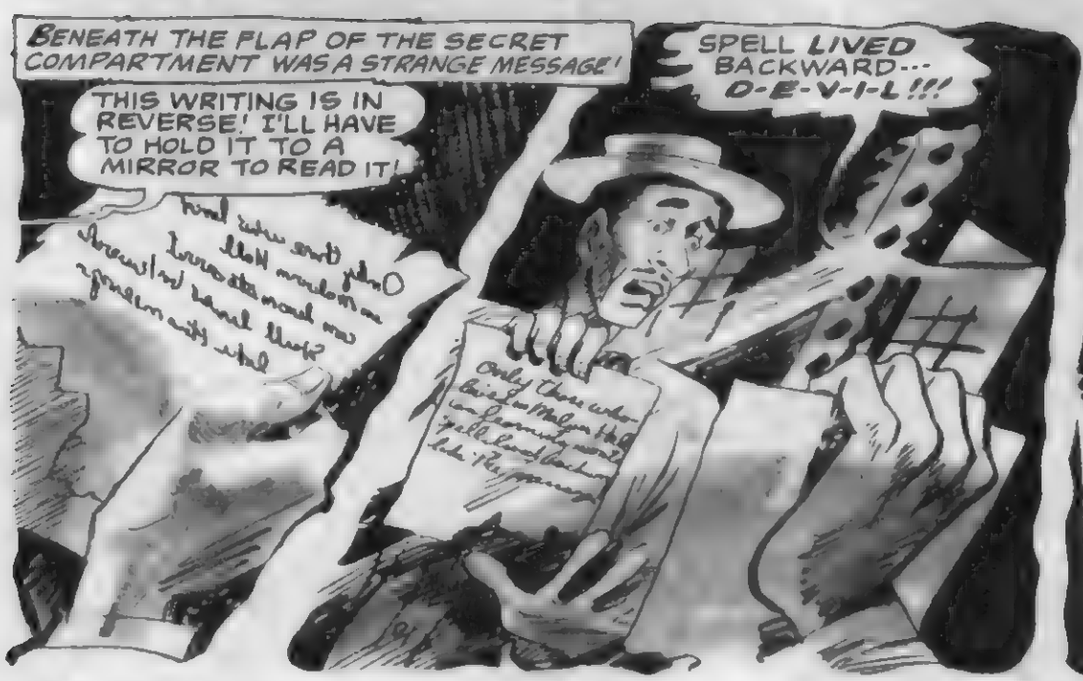

YOU FIEND! YOU'VE MURDERED DUNSTER!
NO! NO! IT WAS CARPO WHO DID IT! YOU SEE, I HAD HIM CHAINED IN THE WATER AND HE BROKE FREE!

YOU MUST BELIEVE ME! HE WAS A CREATURE FROM THE SARGASSO SEA! YOU MUST BELIEVE ME!
HE'S COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS HEAD, MR. LOTHER!

DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME! YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME!
WE TRIED OUR BEST TO WARN HIM... AGAINST GOING TO THE SARGASSO!

And IN THE DAYS TO COME, PAUL RAYMOND'S CRIES OF HORROR RANG THROUGH THE COUNTY MADHOUSE NIGHT AND DAY...
COME BACK, CARPO! COME BACK! PROVE TO THEM I'M NOT INSANE!
THERE HE GOES AGAIN! THERE'S NO HOPE OF A CURE!
NO... NO CURE FOR SOMETHING NO DOCTOR CAN EVER UNDERSTAND!
THE END

the Devil's Looking Glass

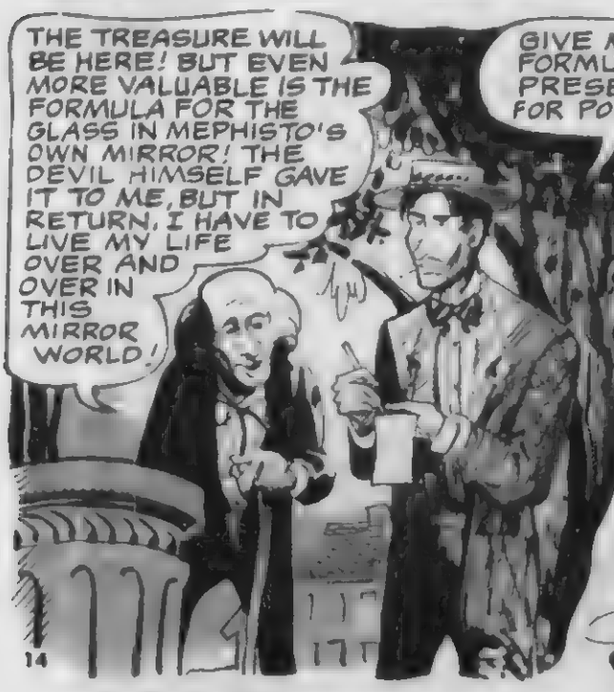

BENEATH THE FLAP OF THE SECRET COMPARTMENT WAS A STRANGE MESSAGE!
THIS WRITING IS IN REVERSE! I'LL HAVE TO HOLD IT TO A MIRROR TO READ IT!
SPELL LIVED BACKWARD... D-E-V-I-L!!!

WHY, THAT SPELLS DEVIL!

CORRECT, MR. DANA! I AM AT YOUR SERVICE! STEP INTO THE MIRROR AND HEAR MY SIDE OF THE STORY!

WHY, THIS MUST BE MALVERN HALL AS IT WAS A CENTURY AGO!
EXACTLY! HERE IS OLD TOBIAS MALVERN! HE'S BEEN HOPING SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS WOULD STEP IN TO SEE HIM...

COME! I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE I'LL BURY MY TREASURE WHILE YOU MAKE A MAP OF IT!
GREAT! ... AN' THEN I CAN TAKE IT BACK TO MY OWN TIME!


THE TREASURE WILL BE HERE! BUT EVEN MORE VALUABLE IS THE FORMULA FOR THE GLASS IN MEPHISTO'S OWN MIRROR! THE DEVIL HIMSELF GAVE IT TO ME, BUT IN RETURN, I HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE OVER AND OVER IN THIS MIRROR WORLD!

GIVE ME THE FORMULA! I'LL PRESERVE IT FOR POSTERITY!
YOU CAN NOT LEAVE!

YOU CAN'T HOLD HIM HERE, MEPHISTO, BECAUSE YOU INVITED HIM THROUGH THE MIRROR!

IT WAS ALL IN OUR PACT-- REMEMBER?
YES! I DID GIVE YOU THE BETTER OF THE BARGAIN, EXCEPT WHERE YOU ARE PERSONALLY CONCERNED, AT LEAST YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE!
BUT, I CAN! SO LONG!
BACK IN THE WORLD OF TODAY, DANA LEFT THE ATTIC AND WENT TO THE RUINS OF OLD MALVERN HALL!
IF I START DIGGING UP THIS RUBBLE, SOMEBODY WILL TIP OFF THE OTHER MALVERN HEIRS! THE DEVIL TAKE THEM! SAY-- THAT'S AN IDEA! THE FORMULA!
ETCHED IN DANA'S EVIL MIND WERE THE DETAILS OF THE PACT BETWEEN MEPHISTO AND TOBIAS MALVERN! HE SAW A WAY TO SCARE THE MALVERNS...
ALL RIGHT, MR. DANA! BUT I'M SURE YOUR FORMULA CONTAINS TOO MUCH SULPHUR AND BRIMSTONE!
I'LL TAKE THE RISK IF THE MIRRORS DON'T TURN OUT RIGHT!
DANA FOLLOWED THROUGH WITH A DIABOLICAL SCHEME...
THE DEVIL'S OWN FORMULA! I'LL COME AROUND IN THE MORNING AND SEE HOW I MADE OUT!
CLICK!
FORGY WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE FUMES... HE COULD NOT ESCAPE!!
I'M... I'M CHOKING!
HELP! HELP! LET ME OUT... GASP
BANG
NEXT DAY...
POOR FORGY! SHERIFF, HE MUST HAVE USED THE WRONG FORMULA AND WAS OVERCOME BY THE FUMES! BUT I'LL STILL BUY THE MIRRORS!
THAT'S MIGHTY FINE OF YOU, MR. DANA!
SO DANA OBTAINED MEPHISTO'S MIRRORS AND PROCEEDED WITH THE NEXT STAGE OF HIS FIENDISH PLAN!
EASY... THOSE CRATES ARE FULL OF MIRRORS!
NOW TO SEND PASSES TO ALL THE MALVERN HEIRS IN THE TOWNS WE PLAY!

YES, DANA KNEW HIS RELATIVES. ALL THE MALVERNS WOULDN'T MISS ANYTHING THEY COULD GET FREE!
HA! HERE'S A PAIR OF MALVERNS NOW!
YES, COUSIN CARRIE, THESE PASSES THAT SOMEBODY SENT US ARE GOOD FOR EVERY AMUSEMENT!
LET'S GO THROUGH THE MIRROR MAZE!
ONCE INSIDE...
YIKES! LOOK!
CARRIE -- HELP ME! I SEE THE DEVIL... HE MUST BE AFTER ME! LET ME OUT OF HERE!
WHY, HUBERT-- YOU'RE GOING RIGHT THROUGH THAT MIRROR!
I'M TRAPPED! HELP ME! CARRIE... ANYBODY!
WHY-- I'VE GONE RIGHT THROUGH A MIRROR, TOO!
AH, ANOTHER DESCENDANT! WELCOME!
PARDON, SIR, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR MR. HUBERT MALVERN AND HIS COUSIN, CARRIE! PERHAPS THEY LOST THEIR WAY IN THE MAZE!
IF THEY DID, YOU'LL SEE THEM AS SOON AS THE MIRRORS ARE PACKED!
I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN! THEY COULDN'T HAVE GONE INTO THE MAZE!
I KNEW IT WOULD WORK! WHEN THE DEVIL SCARED THEM FROM ONE MIRROR, THEY RECOILED THROUGH ANOTHER! I'M SMARTER THAN MEPHISTO, TO THINK OF SURROUNDING MALVERNS WITH HIS MIRRORS!

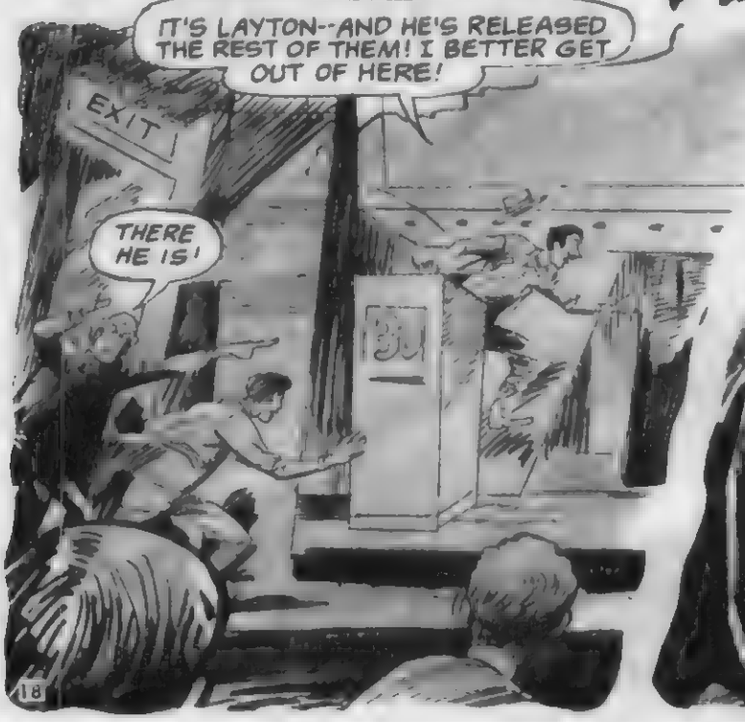
And SO, THE PARADE CONTINUED IN EVERY TOWN...
IS THIS PASS GOOD HERE?
CERTAINLY, MY FRIEND! STEP INSIDE!
HA HA
HA! YOU'D THINK THE DEVIL HIMSELF WAS IN THERE!

BUT, AS THE MALVERNS DWINDLED, SO DID THE GATE RECEIPTS...
HEY, BOYS, HOW ABOUT THE MIRROR MAZE?
EEEK
YEAH-- WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S FACES LOOKING FROM THE MIRRORS AND SCREAMING!
NOT A CHANCE! IT'S SPOOKY!
WHAT IF PEOPLE DO SEE THOSE FACES? NOBODY IS GOING TO HELP THEM EXCEPT ANOTHER MALVERN, AND ALL THE MALVERNS CAN SEE IS THE DEVIL! HA! HA!

JUST ONE MORE--GEORGE LAYTON--AND I'LL DISPOSE OF HIM IN THIS TOWN, THEN I CAN GET RID OF THOSE MIRRORS AND DIG UP THE FORTUNE ALL FOR MYSELF!
THAT'S LAYTON, ALL RIGHT! HE'S THE ONLY PERSON THAT RECEIVED A PASS! I'LL BREAK UP THOSE MIRRORS AFTER THE DEVIL TAKES LAYTON!

YES, DANA HAD IT FIGURED, OR SO HE THOUGHT! BUT FOR SOME STRANGE REASON, LAYTON DIDN'T SEE MEPHISTO IN THOSE MIRRORS!
HELP! PLEASE HELP!
TAKE MY HAND!
MALVERNS!
GET US OUT!
ALL LAYTON SAW WERE FACES OF MALVERN HEIRS! THEY DID NOT SCARE HIM AWAY--AS THEY DID OTHER PEOPLE...
WHY--WHY GEORGE LAYTON! OH THANK YOU!
GIVE ME YOUR HAND!

HERE YOU COME, HUBERT! BUT HOW DID YOU GET IN THERE?
IT'S A LONG STORY! WE'LL TELL YOU AFTER WE SETTLE WITH THE FELLOW WHO TALKED US INTO IT!
AND STILL THEY COME!
WE WANT RALPH DANA WHO RUNS THIS MIRROR MAZE!
COME RIGHT ALONG- AND ALL HOLD HANDS SO YOU WON'T GO THROUGH ANY MORE MIRRORS!


IT'S LAYTON--AND HE'S RELEASED THE REST OF THEM! I BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!
EXIT
THERE HE IS!

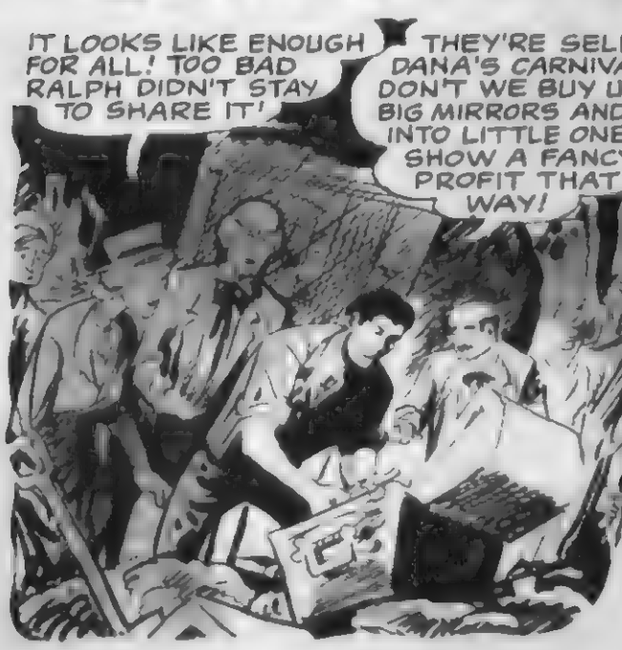
MY ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH THE MIRROR MAZE! BUT I'LL HAVE TO CHANCE IT!
LET HIM GO! THAT'S ONE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN'T FOLLOW HIM!

YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! NOT IN MY OWN MIRROR MAZE! I'LL FIND A WAY OUT!
WELCOME HOME, GREAT-GRAND-NEPHEW! NOW YOU CAN SPEND THE REST OF ETERNITY HELPING ME BURY TREASURE FOR OTHERS TO DIG UP!
THIS TIME THERE WAS NO INVITATION!

THIS EXPLAINS THINGS! DANA HAD A MAP SHOWING WHERE THE TREASURE IS! THAT'S WHY HE WANTED TO GET RID OF US!
IT DOESN'T EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, GEORGE!

IF ALL THE REST OF US SAW THE DEVIL IN THOSE MIRRORS, WHY DIDN'T YOU?
BECAUSE I'M NOT A MALVERN!

MY CLAIMS ON THE ESTATE COMES THROUGH MY STEP-FATHER, SO ALL I SAW WERE YOUR FACES... NOT MEPHISTO'S! LET'S DIG UP OUR FORTUNE!


IT LOOKS LIKE ENOUGH FOR ALL! TOO BAD RALPH DIDN'T STAY TO SHARE IT!
THEY'RE SELLING DANA'S CARNIVAL! WHY DON'T WE BUY UP THOSE BIG MIRRORS AND CUT THEM INTO LITTLE ONES! WE'D SHOW A FANCY PROFIT THAT WAY!
A GOOD IDEA!

HELP!
AND SO, TODAY, IN ANY OF A FEW THOUSAND MIRRORS, YOU ARE APT TO CATCH A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF A HAUNTED FACE... RALPH DANA'S!!!
THE END

WIND DEMON

■ I had been on a walking trip through the mountains of Japan and a storm had forced me to take refuge as an overnight guest in a Trappist monastery.

In spite of the warmth from the *hibachi*, the heating-brazier, I found myself shivering, not so much from the chill dampness nor yet the sudden gusts of wind that shook the shutters of the old building as at a vision which had come to me out of the mist. Time after time as a cloud had swept down upon me, my half-brother's face, malignant and terrifying, had stared out at me from behind rock or bush. He was, I knew, on the other side of the world. Had his jealeous hatred grown so intense as to become visible to me? Could thoughts become visible?

"What is that you say, sir?"

I looked up starled, not realizing that I had spoken aloud. The man in monk's robe who was setting my supper tray on a low table before me had paused and was gazing at me—strangely, I thought. He was tall and supple and under thirty, but his eyes gave him an almost ancient expression—burning blue eyes which held some secret misery that had bitten into his soul. His chin had a deep cleft in it, his skin was dark with tan and his features held more than a suggestion of the Celt in the upturned nose and lips that should have been ready with a smile but were not. Instead there was a wistful melancholy that spoke of longings unfullfilled. But there was that in his face which lured me on to tell him that which had passed between my half-brother and myself —the usual story of vindictive jealousy—and then of the vision.

When I had finished he stood a moment immobile. Then slowly, very slowly, he said:

"Next week I may take the oath of silence—after that, if I do, I shall not be permitted to speak—it is of God that you came here tonight. . . . I will tell you—you will listen. . . . I thought my own experience unique—I perceive it is not. I will tell you how it happened."

It was as though this man were clutching at me as at a plank before the waters should close over him. Then as the wind wailed and shrieked outside in sudden gusts of madness he threw up his head as though it might have a message for him.

"It was on a night like this that it occurred."

The tumult of the storm deadened his voice and I had to lean across the *hibachi* to hear him. The darkness crept into the room and closed over us like a pool of black water—the light from the two candles failed to dispel it.

"I will begin at the beginning, but it is a long story," he said.

He told of his English father and Irish mother—one of the Dunhavens of Dunhaven Castle—from whom had come a heritage that had cursed him—yes, cursed him—with an insatiable desire for beauty and with conflicting impulses which had caught him as in a net. He told how he had revolted from the commonplace which was England and was ever haunted by the romance of far-off places. Finally he drifted into a position in a bank, met Margaret,

and, as she suggested peace, he became engaged to her. But the realities of his life did not equal the realities of his dreams—he would saturate himself with the charm of an Oriental country; then he would return to England, marry Margaret and settle down. He could do this after he had sown the seeds of his romantic quest and reaped a crop to last him the rest of his life. So he thought—but in any event he must have the experience. At his request the bank transferred him to its Tokyo branch in Japan, and Mararet, understanding, had sent him off with a smile.

Margaret, he called her; he mentioned no other name.

The first month he had lived in one of the Tokyo hotels and had hated it.

"I hated its artificality, its calculating servants, its constant ferment of tourists," he said.

I nodded—I knew the hotel.

And then a dinner had been given by a Japanese client to the officials of the bank, and Ryu San, the geisha, had danced.

"Ryu San was not her real name—it was her geisha name—it means Dragon and was bestowed upon her because of her special dance," he explained.

"And how wonderful she was in that Dragon dance! Mysterious and alluring—yes, and repelling also—but mostly alluring. You have seen geisha and you know how lovely some of them are. Well, Ryu San was also called the Pearl. Her eyes had tiny gold flecks in them—queer eyes—the lids curved like a rose leaf. and they were slightly uptlited. This, as you know, is very rare and is a mark of beauty in the Orient. I have seen only one other Japanese girl with eyes like that, and she was of noble birth."

The man was gazing unseeing at the shadows in the corner.

"Her hair gleamed like black satin and her white oval face—"

His words faltered—he made a banishing gesture—and when he continued he spoke more quickly:

"But it was her smile that fascinated me—that strange half-smile as though she saw things which I did not see—as though she knew hidden sources of charm that would satisfy the pagan passion of my soul.

"Two weeks after that dinner Ryu

San and I moved into the Temple House." This remark fell and echoed in the stillness given to the room by a lull in the storm like the soft bounding and rebounding of a rubber ball. He continued:

"The Temple House we called it because it had once been a temple. That was the reason Ryu San had selected it—she knew I would like it because of its associations. And I did—it was one of the things her smile had promised. It had been a temple but not a very prosperous one until one night the *bonze* had a dream in which cries issued from the ground and his robe was plucked by invisible fingers which drew him in his sleep into the garden to a well. I am telling it as he told it. Around him was the darkness of a moonless night, but as he dug, a mist hovered over the hole. This became more and more luminous as he dug until there was revealed a golden image of the goddess Kwannon. For how many centuries had she lain there buried?

"The priest set up this miraculous image on the altar of the temple, and pilgrims came to worship, leaving offerings of money to propitiate her. So the priest was able to build a temple more worthy of the golden Kwannon, and the old temple was made over into a dwelling with Ryu San and me as its first tenants.

"Picture a great rambling temple structure with dark mysterious recesses. This was set in a garden in the middle of which were stepping-stones that wandered past the old mildewed well near which the Kwannon had been found, and then into the graveyard of the temple, which was separated from the garden only by a hedge of low trees which did not really separate but rather joined the garden and graveyard. Aheavy fragrance hung over the garden as well as the graveyard from the incense ever burning at the tombs—the homage of the living to their dead. And sometimes a mist would spread as a stain above the graves and would glow there like a golden exhalation of the earth. The Japanese said it was the souls of the dead and would not visit the graveyard when it was visible."

The eyes of the man were fixed and his voice dwindled off into stillness. The walls of the monastery had vanished and there was the old temple and the garden and the graveyard.

He continued in a slow, even voice:

"Ryu San in her green and gold brocaded robe would dance for me—the Dragon Dance; that is, she would on the evenings when I was not writing to Margaret. On the evenings when I wrote to Margaret, Ryu San would watch me for many moments with an expression in her close-lidded eyes that I did not then understand, after which she would go out across the stepping-stones that lay in a half-circle to the bamboo gate and into the graveyard. She would flash a moment among the stone lanterns and tombstones and then disappear. An hour or so afterward she would return, her kimono edged with drops of dew, and with her came the perfume of incense as if she had bathed in it. But she was as calm as though she had left but to give an order to a servant. I did not ask her where she had been—I did not suspect a lover—I knew she was a one-man woman and the man at that moment happened to be myself. It was only a part of that strangeness which was her attraction—also there was something—an impenetrable Oriental poise that prevented my questioning her.

"It is strange, but I pledge you my word I felt no disloyalty to Margaret at that time. Ryu San was part of the charm of the world which I was seeking; Margaret would be the companion of my life and I would love her with a fixed love after the stinging hunger for romance within me had been gratified. An instinct beyond reason told me this."

It was the morality of the unashamed pagan.

The man gazed abstractedly at the floor and went on:

"I did not deceive Ryu San—I told her that when I left Japan I would leave her. She made no comment—merely smiled her enigmatic smile that promised all things—or nothing.

"And then one evening I took a picture of Margaret from my trunk, put it in an ivory frame and placed it upon my desk. But I fancied that, framed in ivory, Margaret's face lost its piquant quality, and I decided to have the photograph tinted. I was gazing at it when my nerves began to tingle and I was conscious that some one was in the room, althought I had not heard the sliding door open. I turned, and there stood Ryu San, swaying slightly, her leaf-shaped eyelids drawn together. For a moment she became as motionless as a brook that had instantly frozen; then without a word she turned and hurried through the door into the misty graveyard—hurried as though something were drawing her. I watched her go and saw the luminous mist above the graves close around her, and then I thought no more about her."

The storm had subsided and there was a silence in the room that held echoes of itself. A bird or a bat struck the window and the night shivered with the whirring of its wings. The man continued:

"She returned and I remember how her kimono glistened with the dew and her hair looked alive with vibrant tendrils clinging to her cheeks. Her eyes had a stealthy look, hiding behind the lids like frightened animals.

"I asked her to dance for me—the Dragon Dance—but somehow that night her dance was too realistic—her shadow on the paper *shoji* of the sliding doors too sinuous and writhing, and the sibilant song which accompanied the dance cut the air like hisses. I stopped her and I am not sure but that there was relief in her eyes.

"A week later Margaret's

photograph had been tinted and was back in its frame on my desk. She gazed at me so sweetly that I gayly blew a kiss to her as I set forth the next morning for the bank. At the corner of the street I realized that I had left my watch under my pillow and went back for it. The front door was open and I made no noise as I entered the house. The sliding door to my room was also open and I slipped quietly into the room. As I did so, I saw Ryu San glide through the door that led into the garden. I stopped a moment to watch her—her walk always fascinated me—it had the unconscious grace of a panther—when suddenly I had the sensation of some one—something—being in the room, and I found myself peering into a darkened corner alongside my desk.

"My senses reeled! What was it I saw? And did I see anything but shadows? And yet those shadows seemed to unite into a vapory form which turned features toward me that were a horrible travesty of hate. The lower part of the figure slowly elongated and tapered off and seemed to float toward me. Involuntarily I drew back and as I did so collided with a servant who had entered the room, and when I looked again in the corner there was no vapory form—only ordinary shadows. I picked up my watch and departed for the bank.

"Out again in the sunshine I laughed at myself. A fancy, thought I, a shadow on my brain. And yet at the back of my brain I believed I had seen what I had seen. For days it made me horribly nervous and I spoke to Ryu San about it. She laughed, queerly I thought, and said that such fancies were common with people of my temperament, and recommended a doctor. But I refused to see a doctor and gradually I forgot the apparition in the corner. I did not see it again and decided that I had really been a bit off. Anyhow, all was well now. But I felt that Ryu San was watching me—watching me from under her leaf-shaped eyelids."

In the pause that followed, the man poured a cup of tea and drank it. Then he resumed his tale in quickened words but still passionless as though stating something which bore no relation to himself.

"It happened one evening in early September," he went on. "The day had been one of those hot, humid days that often come in early September—a heat insidious and cloying. I had told Ryu San that I would go to Kamakura that evening and perhaps stay all night—it would be cool there and I could have a swim in the sea. But that afternoon I changed my mind—it was the typhoon season and one was making its way up from Kyushu. I did not wish to be marooned at the seashore in a typhoon, so I had dinner on the hotel roof and started for home.

"All day the heat had spread around and had wrapped my body as in a steaming blanket—it oppressed my limbs with the oppression of some lifeless weight. There was a breathless quality about it that was ominous in its very quiet—something scornful as though it were holding itself in check for the moment and was not sure whether it would let itself loose or not—that was it, a sort of suspense—and the gray dusk unfolding did not disturb it, but only made it the more dreadful.

"There are times when a stormy melancholy day so dominates a sensitive nature that every cell of the brain seems instinct with a premonition of evil that throws a black mantle over the reason. I found myself moving like an automaton enveloped in a dread I neither understood nor could shake off.

"My steps lagged as I approached the house. As I walked up the path through the garden I noticed how like black blots the pine trees looked against the gray sky and how like limbs distorted in pain their branches were in the grip of the wind.

"I realized that I was in a morbid mood and I determined to try and throw it off as soon as I could by reading a novel. But when I entered the room I instantly knew I had no need of a novel. There on the floor, shredded into a hundred pieces as if by the teeth of an infuriated animal was a letter to Margaret which I had that morning left on my desk. My blood changed in a moment from sluggish lead to a devastating fire, and a cry of rage broke from me, for I immediately divined that it was Ryu San who had dared to desecrate my letter to Margaret. It was not to be borne—I would find her, drag her into the room and confront her with

that devilish litter on the floor. I saw myself in a dramatic pose, pointing to the debris and telling her what I thought about it. And then—well, I thought she would never allow her jealousy to get control of her again.

"Somehow I knew that she had gone to the graveyard, and without thinking about it I started across the garden, my body so tingling with rage that I hardly noticed the gusts of wind that pushed me this way and that way. It was a strange, wild storm—the beginning of a typhoon—and as I passed through the bamboo gate I noticed that above the graves was that unnatural luminous mist that so terrified the Japanese, and it was being tossed about by the wind like a chiffon veil.

"And there beneath the swaying trees in an open strip alongside the hedge I saw the gleam of Ryu San's green and gold kimono flashing like a jade flame in the gray mist.

"I started toward her but was halted in my steps by a most singular spectacle. Ryu San was dancing—she was dancing there in the mist like some mad puppet—the Dragon Dance—twisting and writhing like a creature in pain, and with a gesture of impotent rage plucking at the hedge and casting the branches before her to dance on them. She tore at her kimono so violently that I thought I heard the sound of the rent cloth above the noise of the storm. This may not have been possible—I was in an overwrought condition, but I do know that I heard her laugh—a shrill mocking laugh such as one might expect from a mad devil.

"It was so preposterous and ghastly that I found myself unable to move and I stood there like a stone image staring at the gyrating figure in a dumb amazement. And over and all around us was the tumult of the maddened elements.

"It was intolerable — I could stand it no longer—and I was just forcing myself to move toward her when I noticed that she had crouched down against the trunk of a pine tree and had thrown up her hands as if to ward off some fearful menace.

"And then I saw *it!*

"The vapory form I had seen before in the corner of my room. It hung in the air and tapered off to the ground—a misshapen grotesque thing like a cloud of smoke issuing from the inner fire of the earth. And it had a rare ghost of a face twisted and distorted into a horrible grimace as if fashioned by the hand of a fiend.

"As I watched it with a sick and silent fascination it seemed to float forward to Ryu San. With a low moan she arose to her feet and began to glide toward it in a wild, joyless measure of the Dragon Dance. And for a long breath they confronted each other—the horrible tapering figure and the swaying girl—and then gradually the specter vanished—was sucked back into the grayness that had borne it, but only to reappear as Ryu San stopped her dance—stronger in outline, it seemed to me, and more menacing. And beyond and

through the apparition I could see the black shadows of the pine trees, their branches dancing in a devil's dance in the wind.

"Apparently Ryu San did not know I was there. As for me, I could not move, I could not speak. My feet were rooted in the ground and my tongue was lead in my mouth. Like a statue I watched this incredible duel between the specter and the geisha girl.

"Manifestly her weapon against this terror was the Dragon Dance, and at each advance of the apparition she would rise to her feet and fall into the wildest measures of this dance, whereupon the specter would gradually lessen until it quite disappeared.

"I can not say what chaotic thoughts of helping her went through my mind as I stood there trying to shout or move, or in some way to let Ryu San know that I was there—perhaps none—my white man's code of chivalry had tumbled about my ears in the face of this exotic spectacle.

"Back and forth this went on—for hours, it seemed to me. At each advance of the figure, Ryu San would claw at it with hooked fingers, from which, as I noted with that attention to detail so strangely present at such times, fell tiny drops—was it blood? But this could not go on forever; Ryu San was growing weary and I thought the specter was growing stronger, denser. The pine trees beyond it seemed not so clearly outlined as before—or was the increasing darkness giving it the substance it lacked in the gray twilight?

"I do not know, but I do know that the storm suddenly struck the graveyard with a thunderous force. The branches of the pine trees trembled and shrieked, as they went down beneath the blows; the wind groaned as though being forcibly drawn through the pipes of an unwilling organ which tried to dispel it with discordant violence; the hedge was torn apart and the small saplings were uprooted and tossed hither and thither like leaves. The terrible promise of that awful day was fulfilled. The typhoon was upon us.

"The girl, as though spurred on to increased fury by the storm and plucking strength from its violence, began to dance more and more

in a frenzy. And the thought came to me that it resembled nothing so much as a dragon's head I had seen picturing a fable. She had never done that in her Dragon Dance for me, and I found myself thinking how horribly realistic it made the dance. An incredible thought under the circumstances, but then the circumstances were incredible. For the moment I had forgotten the apparition in the awful fascination of Ryu San's dance, and when my eyes were drawn to it, it had changed. Long sinuous tentacles were issuing from its body and feeling out toward the posturing girl. And through the harsh noises of the typhoon, the breaking limbs of trees, the wailing wind, the thuds of falling tombstones, ran a thin sound of sibilant hisses like a scarlet thread in a black fabric.

"And then suddenly the storm ceased. As though spent with its own fury it crumpled to nothing, and the clouds were parted by the moon, which hung between them looking like a ghastly grinning skull. With the ceasing of the storm, Ryu San collapsed. She cowered against the tree trunk and did not rise again. The specter with inconceivable rapidity changed—it took on the character of a dragon from whose snarling mouth darted a tenuous tongue which licked the mist, and hisses cut the now quiet air like sword thrusts.

"It was then that I found my voice. I shouted, I made futile gestures of going to her. For one instant Ryu San took her eyes off the specter and glanced at me, and again there was that laugh—that horrible mocking laugh.

"And then with one snarling hiss the dragon form was upon her. It coiled tentacle after tentacle around her—her neck, her waist, her knees, her arms. She threw them off one by one only to be held by another which darted out of the dragon's body. She fought it with her hands, her feet; she bit at it, but the hideous fiery tongue licked her face; its fangs dug into her cheeks; its eyes darted their flame at her—and yet she laughed—the laugh of death.

"Man, that went on without end, it seemed to me, while I stood helpless, my blood turned to icy water that made me shiver and shake so that I remember hearing my teeth chatter. My tongue filled my dry mouth and my eyes burned with a hundred hot needles. But again I was powerless—my limbs were lead and could not be moved.

"Eternity it seemed and yet was probably only minutes when sud-

denly Ryu San seemed to yield to that diabolical embrace and sank like a dying flower unresisting to the ground, and the dragon that had coiled itself around her disappeared—drawn into her quiet body, and I no longer heard that awful mad laugh.

"Then and then only did the power of movement come to me. I rushed forward and lifted Ryu San in my arms. But I laid her down again—gently—she was dead!

"She was dead!" the man repeated. Then he stretched out his arms and raised his head.

"What was it?" I asked in a shuddering whisper.

"I do not know," replied the man. "Perhaps Ryu San's jealousy was brought to such a peak of strength that it was visible in horrible shape even to me—the dragon shape most natural to her thought. Or perhaps my own imagination fashioned the specter out of the mist in which she in her insane jealousy was dancing. I do not know. I only know that Ryu San was dead—that *was* reality."

The man raised his troubled eyes to mine. He must have seen the question there for he added:

"You may wonder why I did not return then to Margaret. I could not—I tried but could not. And as I am a Catholic I came here for peace."

He arose, and some of the trouble left his face as though the grim outline of his experience was softened by some thought, and I could see this thought sail along before the wind of his hope as he said:

"Two years have passed . . . I have expiated the crime—if crime it was—have I not? I do not know . . . it rests with Margaret. If I have, she will come on the *Suwa Maru* next week, and with her I shall forget." And then the shadows settled again in his eyes as he added:

"If she does not . . . I shall remain here—a Trappist monk . . . in silence . . . and *try* to forget."

Then he drew together the folds of his coarse brown robe and left the room.

When next I saw him I was in the port city on the Street of a Thousand Merchants, and out of a motley crowd two people came toward me—a tall, fair girl with eyes as soft and brown as a moth's wing, and a man, tall, supple, under thirty, with blue eyes that blazed with happiness and a deep cleft in his chin. He did not see me—his eyes were fixed on the upturned face of the girl. It was no time for greetings. I passed on. •

MONSTER TOWN

LOOK! LUNA HAS SEIZED TWO FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD!

UGH! SUCH DEFORMED BEINGS!

STEP ASIDE! DR. BONO MAY SAVE THEM IF HE OPERATES!

T-THIS IS FANTASTIC! A VILLAGE OF CREATURES WHERE *WE* ARE THE ONES WHO ARE LOOKED UPON... AS FREAKS!

THE HIDEOUS CREATURES LIVED IN A WORLD OF THEIR OWN... CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TWO MEMBERS FROM OUR OWN SOCIETY FALL VICTIM TO THESE MONSTER...

IN THE DEEP SOUTH DOCTOR JOHN AMES AND HIS WIFE DRIVE ALONG A STRANGE BACK ROAD!

JOHN, YOU'VE BEEN DRIVING ALONG THIS BACK ROAD FOR HOURS! PLEASE... LET'S RETURN TO THE HIGHWAY...

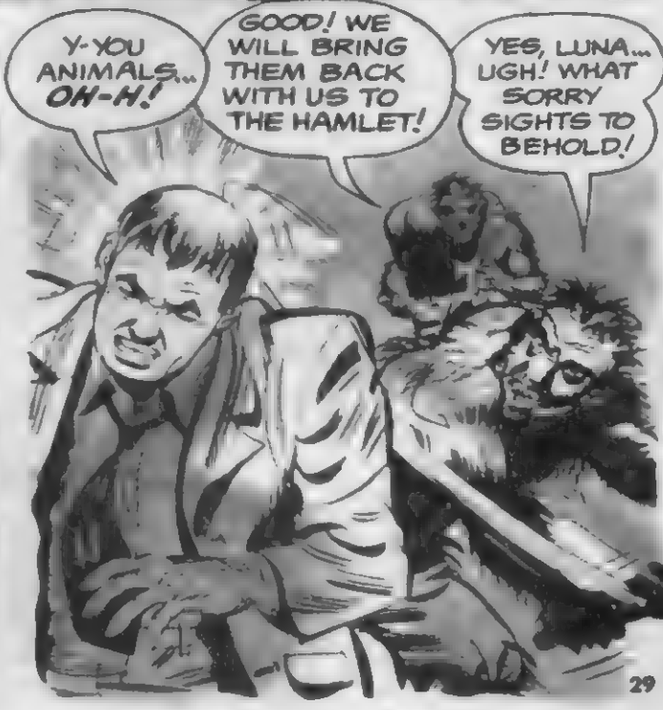
NONESENSE, DARLING! THIS IS THE THRILL OF TOURING... SEEING THE BACK COUNTRY!

SUDDENLY...

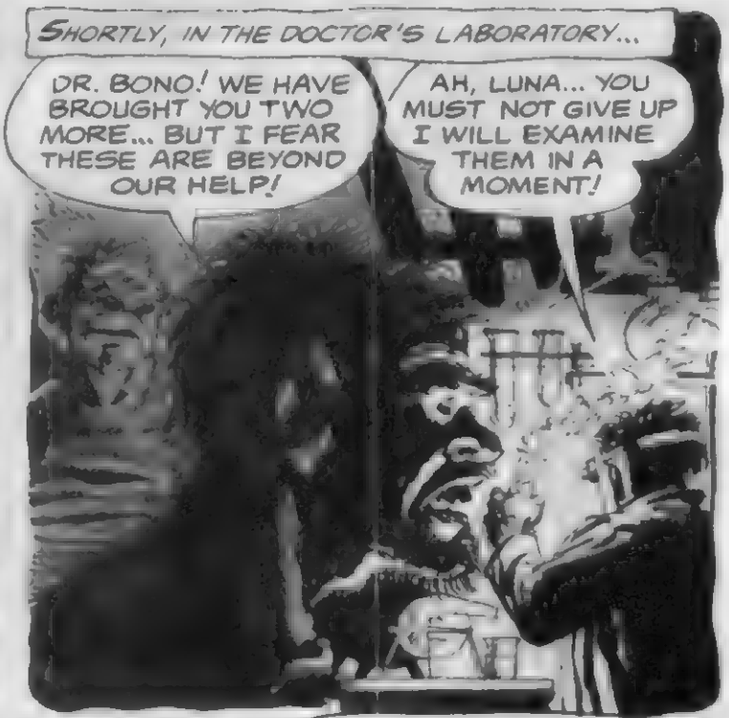
BUT, IT'S SO EERIE HERE AND... *JOHN! WHAT'S HAPPENED?*

T-THE BRAKES! I-I CAN'T STOP THE CAR!

THE WATER CLOSES IN UPON THE WOMAN WHO PREFERS DEATH TO THE TERROR BEFORE HER! ABRUPTLY HANDS CLUTCH AT HER HAIR AND...

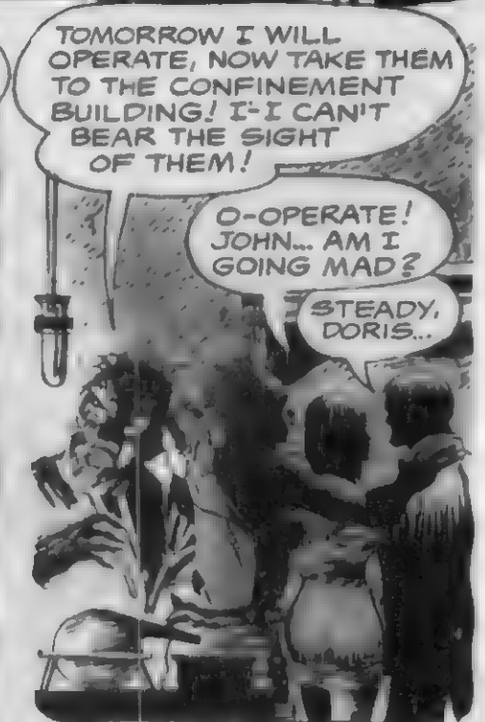


HOURS LATER, THE REACH THEIR EERIE DESTINATION!
LUNA! WHAT HAVE YOU THERE... MORE OF THE UGLY ONES FROM OUTSIDE?
YES! THESE TWO ARE THE MOST HORRIBLE WE HAVE YET BROUGHT BACK! STEP ASIDE... DR. BONO MUST SEE THEM AT ONCE!


SHORTLY, IN THE DOCTOR'S LABORATORY...
DR. BONO! WE HAVE BROUGHT YOU TWO MORE... BUT I FEAR THESE ARE BEYOND OUR HELP!
AH, LUNA... YOU MUST NOT GIVE UP I WILL EXAMINE THEM IN A MOMENT!

NOW WHERE ARE THEY...O-OH! YOU DID NOT EXAGGERATE! THEY ARE INDEED HIDEOUS, LUNA!
NO! NO! I-I CAN'T LOOK!
GASP!

YES, THEY ARE PARTICULARLY UGLY! LUNA! WE MUST ACT QUICKLY IF WE ARE TO SAVE THEM!
YES!


TOMORROW I WILL OPERATE, NOW TAKE THEM TO THE CONFINEMENT BUILDING! I-I CAN'T BEAR THE SIGHT OF THEM!
O-OPERATE! JOHN... AM I GOING MAD?
STEADY, DORIS...

IN THE DAMP CELL DOCTOR JOHN AMES AND HIS WIFE ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE THEIR FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE!
I-IT MUST BE A DREAM! THIS COULDN'T HAPPEN TO US, JOHN!
I'M AFRAID THIS IS NO NIGHTMARE, DORIS! WE'VE STUMBLED UPON A CIVILIZATION IN REVERSE! THESE UNFORTUNATE CREATURES CONSIDER PHYSICAL BEAUTY UGLY!

I-I SEE! THEN... IN THEIR EYES WE ARE THE FREAKS!
EXACTLY! AND JUST AS OUR PLASTIC SURGEONS FIX DISTORTED CREATURES THESE CREATURES INTEND TO MAKE US LOOK LIKE THEM!

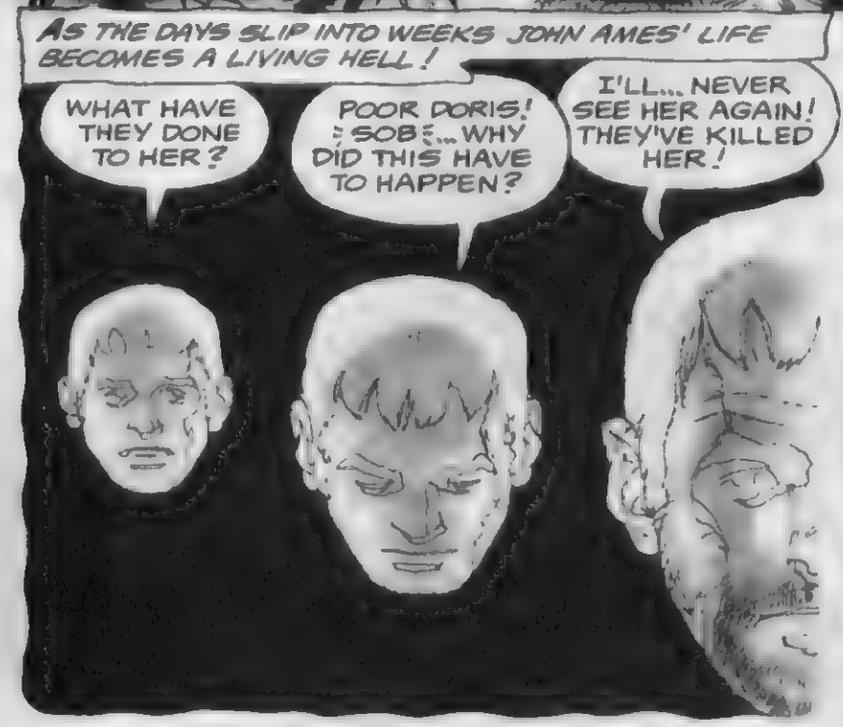
JOHN! YOU MEAN THEY'RE GOING TO OPERATE ON US AND... OH, NO!
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE, DORIS!

TERROR STRICKEN, THE HELPLESS PAIR WAIT THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT! THEN...
HURRY! DR. BONO IS AWAITING THE FEMALE IN THE OPERATING ROOM!
HEHEHE HE.. INDEED!
J-JOHN! DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME!

LEAVE HER ALONE! YOU CAN'T DO THIS.. UGHHH!
SILENCE, FOOL! WE ONLY SEEK TO HELP YOU BOTH! YOU WILL THANK US WHEN IT IS OVER!

NO! NO!
PLEASE DON'T DO THIS THING! GIVE YOURSELVES UP TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, THEY WILL HELP YOU!
SURRENDER TO A CIVILIZATION OF FREAKS! NONSENSE! WE KNOW WHAT THEY DO TO NORMAL ONES SUCH AS WE ARE!

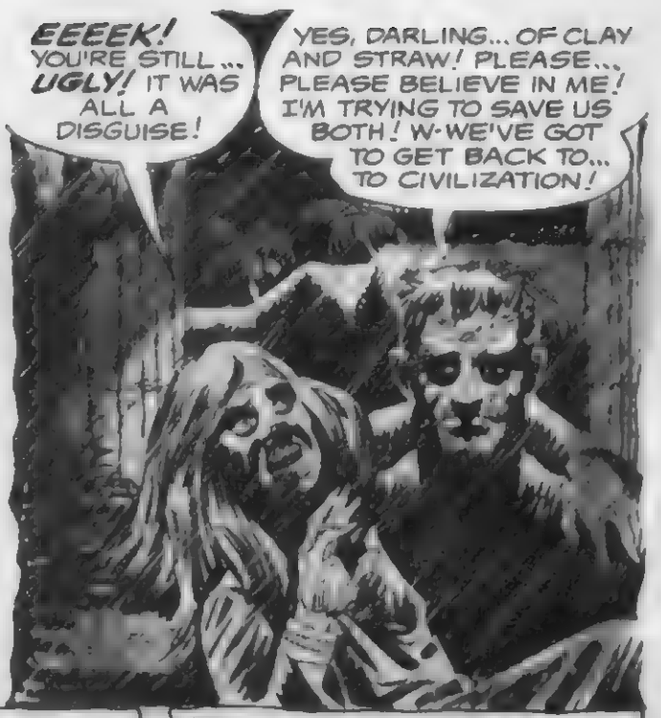
YOU CAGE US LIKE ANIMALS IN YOUR ASYLUMS!
T-THIS IS FANTASTIC! DORIS IS RIGHT! THIS MUST BE A DREAM... A NIGHT-MARE!


AS THE DAYS SLIP INTO WEEKS JOHN AMES' LIFE BECOMES A LIVING HELL!
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO HER?
POOR DORIS! SOB... WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN?
I'LL... NEVER SEE HER AGAIN! THEY'VE KILLED HER!

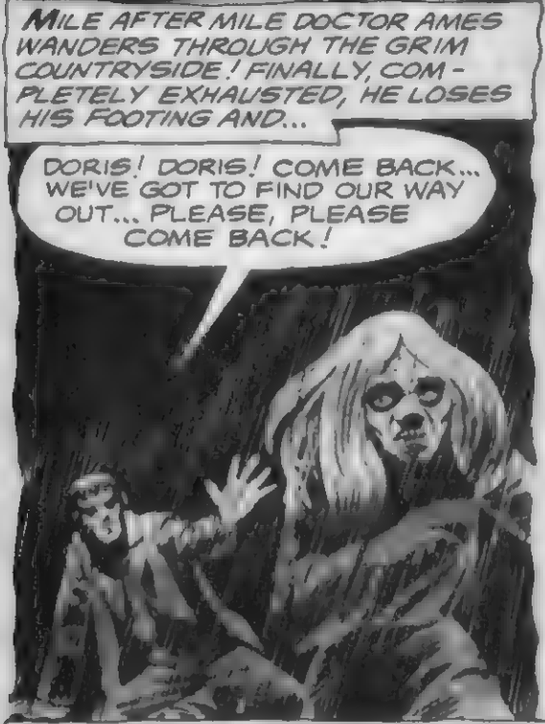
VISIONS OF HIS WIFE'S BEAUTY FILL JOHN'S THOUGHTS THROUGH THE LONG NIGHTS AND DAYS!
OH, DORIS... DORIS! WHAT WILL I EVER DO WITHOUT YOU! THOSE FIENDS... I'LL MAKE THEM PAY FOR THIS!

FINALLY, ON THE FIFTH WEEK THE CREAK OF A DOOR BRINGS AMES TO HIS FEET!
HEE, HEE, UGLY ONE... THE OPERATION IS OVER! BONO HAS SAVED YOUR MATE FROM THE FATE THAT AWAITED HER!
D-DORIS! C-CAN THAT BE DORIS UNDER THE HOOD?
SLOWLY, THE HOOD IS RAISED AND A CRY OF HORROR BREAKS FROM JOHN AMES' LIPS!
G-GREAT MERCY... THAT BRACELET... IT IS DORIS!
YES, JOHN! IT IS YOUR WIFE! I AM VERY HAPPY NOW!
HEE! HEE! AND SOON YOU TOO SHALL HAVE A BRAND NEW, BEAUTIFUL FACE, UGLY ONE!
T-THE FIENDS... THEY'VE STOLEN HER MIND AS WELL AS HER FACE! W-WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT CAN I DO?
DO NOT GRIEVE... SOON YOU WILL JOIN HER AGAIN!
YES, DARLING... I SHALL BE WAITING FOR YOU! TOMORROW BONO SHALL OPERATE ON YOU!
THAT NIGHT, A HEAVY RAIN FALLS INTO AMES' CELL... THE DOCTOR'S MIND REELS UNDER THE IMPACT OF THE HORROR HE HAS SEEN!
IT'S MADNESS...MADNESS! SOMEHOW, SOME WAY, I MUST DO SOMETHING! I MUST ESCAPE... GET DORIS TO A DOCTOR! HMMM, I WONDER...
DOCTOR AMES STOOPS TO HIS KNEES... HIS HANDS DIG DEEP INTO THE SOFT CLAY THE RAIN HAS MADE!
YES, YES... WITH THIS CLAY AND THE STRAW THATCHWORK FROM THE ROOF I MAY BE ABLE TO DO IT! I-I MUST!
AN HOUR LATER, THE GROTESQUE JAILER IS STUNNED AS...
WHAT ARE YOU SHOUTING FOR, UGLY ONE... YIIII! YOU ARE NO LONGER UGLY! YOU ARE... HANDSOME!
YES, YES, YOU FOOL! A MIRACLE HAS HAPPENED! NOW I'M ONE OF YOU... LET ME OUT! LET ME BE WITH MY WIFE AS YOU PROMISED!
THEN, AS THE STARTLED JAILED OPENS THE CELL DOOR...
THERE, YOU DOG! I'M FREE OF YOUR ACCURSED CELL!

INTO THE POURING RAIN JOHN AMES CARRIES HIS STRUGGLING WIFE!

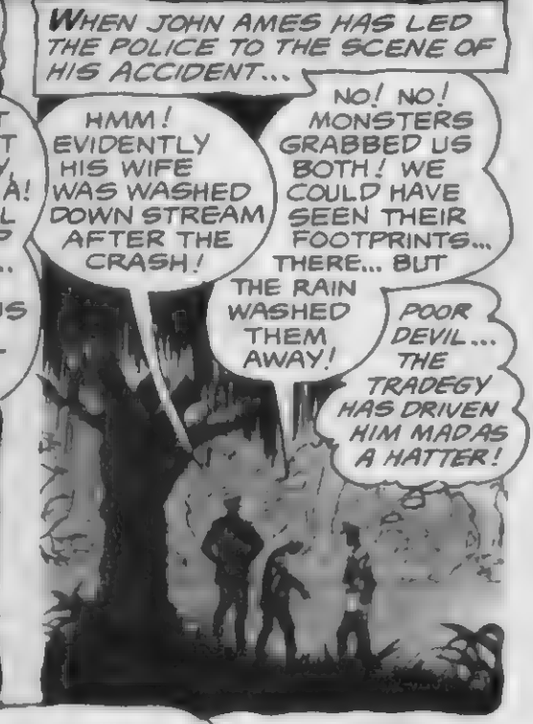


MILE AFTER MILE DOCTOR AMES WANDERS THROUGH THE GRIM COUNTRYSIDE! FINALLY, COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED, HE LOSES HIS FOOTING AND...

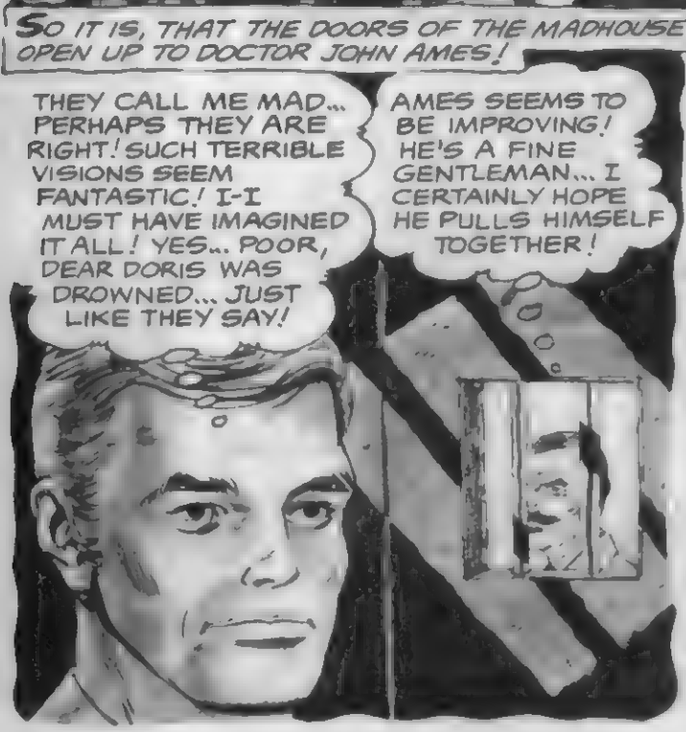


...THE RAIN CEASES! THEN, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A VILLAGE...

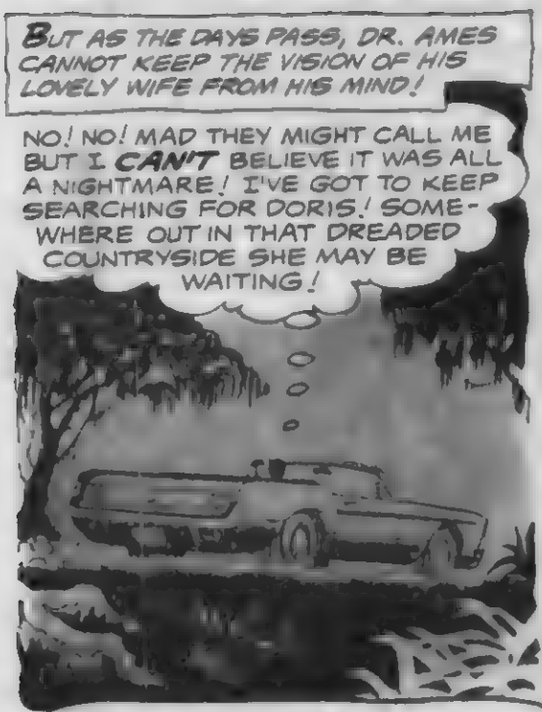
WHEN JOHN AMES HAS LED THE POLICE TO THE SCENE OF HIS ACCIDENT...



SO IT IS, THAT THE DOORS OF THE MADHOUSE OPEN UP TO DOCTOR JOHN AMES!

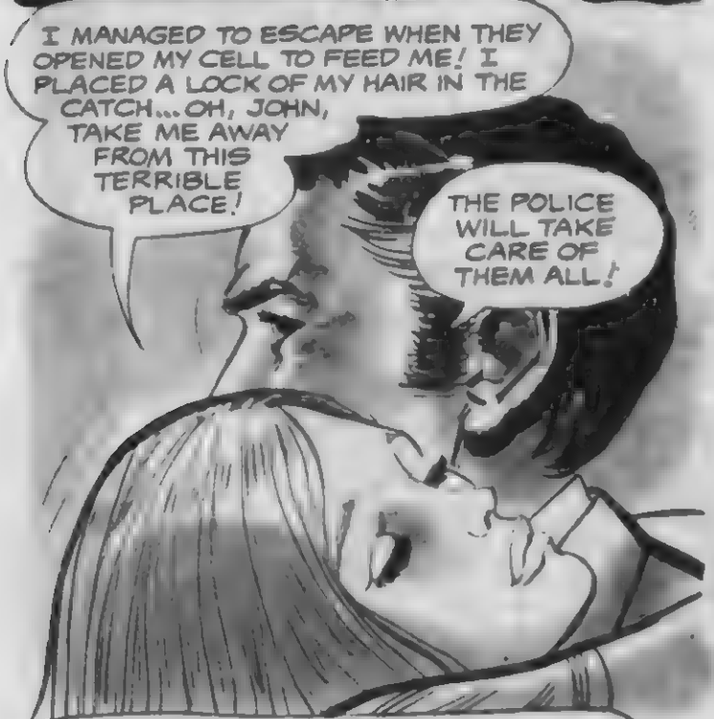


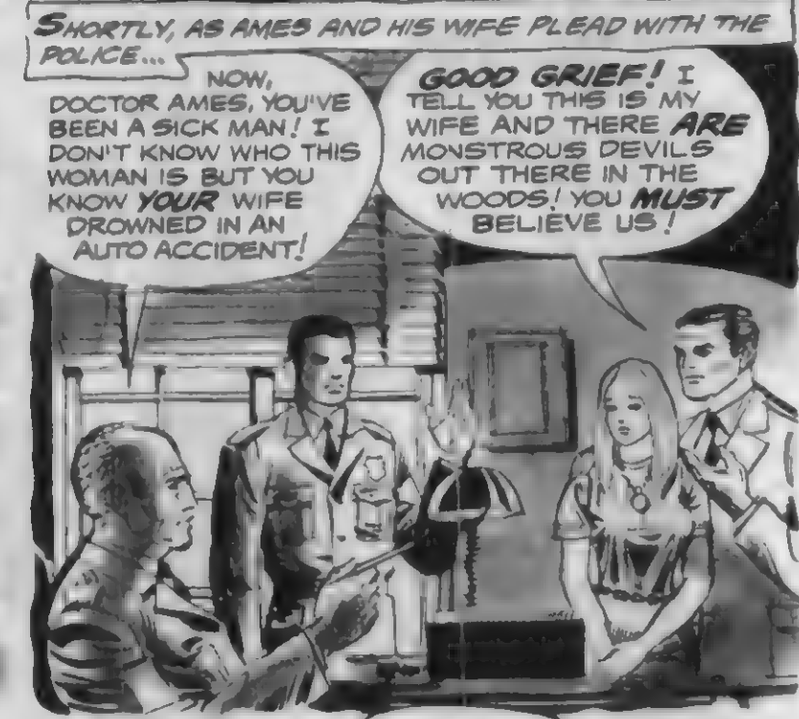
AND IN THE MONTHS TO FOLLOW JOHN AMES DOES PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER SOON THE AUTHORITIES DECIDE HE CAN BE RELEASED!


BUT AS THE DAYS PASS, DR. AMES CANNOT KEEP THE VISION OF HIS LOVELY WIFE FROM HIS MIND!
NO! NO! MAD THEY MIGHT CALL ME BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS ALL A NIGHTMARE! I'VE GOT TO KEEP SEARCHING FOR DORIS! SOMEWHERE OUT IN THAT DREADED COUNTRYSIDE SHE MAY BE WAITING!

NIGHT AND DAY, THE HALF CRAZED DOCTOR ROAMS THE WOODS! THEN...
D-DORIS! DORIS! I'VE FOUND HER! S-SHE'S NORMAL ... SHE'S HERSELF!
J-JOHN...

OH, DARLING... IT WAS TERRIBLE! THEY TRICKED YOU! ONE OF THOSE TERRIBLE CREATURES PRETENDED TO BE ME! THEY... STOLE MY BRACELET SO YOU'D BELIEVE IT!
THE FIENDS! THEIR TWISTED BRAINS WANTED VENGEANCE AGAINST US BECAUSE OF OUR NORMAL LOOKS! THEY SOUGHT TO DRIVE US MAD WITH THAT TRICK!


I MANAGED TO ESCAPE WHEN THEY OPENED MY CELL TO FEED ME! I PLACED A LOCK OF MY HAIR IN THE CATCH... OH, JOHN, TAKE ME AWAY FROM THIS TERRIBLE PLACE!
THE POLICE WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM ALL!


SHORTLY, AS AMES AND HIS WIFE PLEAD WITH THE POLICE...
NOW, DOCTOR AMES, YOU'VE BEEN A SICK MAN! I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS WOMAN IS BUT YOU KNOW YOUR WIFE DROWNED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT!
GOOD GRIEF! I TELL YOU THIS IS MY WIFE AND THERE ARE MONSTROUS DEVILS OUT THERE IN THE WOODS! YOU MUST BELIEVE US!

YOU KNOW IN YOUR DESCRIPTION OF YOUR WIFE YOU DEFINITELY TOLD US SHE ALWAYS WORE A VALUABLE SILVER BRACELET! THIS WOMAN HAS NONE!
WAIT, DEAR... IF WE PERSIST THEY MAY PUT ME BACK IN THE MENTAL INSTITUTION WE'D... BETTER GO!
BUT...

WE'LL JUST FORGET IT EVER HAPPENED, DARLING! AND WE'LL DRIVE BACK HOME!
YES, JOHN... AND THIS TIME WE WON'T TAKE ANY BACK ROADS, WILL WE!
MAD AS MARCH HARES... BOTH OF THEM!
The End

JAVITT RODMAN HAD A MACABRE HOBBY... HE COLLECTED TOMBSTONES. BUT HE LITTLE SUSPECTED THAT ONE DAY, HE HIMSELF MIGHT BE COLLECTED BY THAT GRIM, TERRIFYING COLLECTOR FROM BEYOND WHO HAUNTS THE FINAL RESTING PLACES OF MOULDERING BONES.

TOMBSTONE FOR A GHOUL

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T BURY ME YET! I'M NOT LIKE YOU VILE CREATURES--I'M STILL ALIVE!

Reynoso

SOME PEOPLE ARE CONTENT TO HUNT FOR HUMOROUS EPITAPHS ON TOMBSTONES AND JOT THEM DOWN BUT JAVITT RODMAN CARRIED THAT GRUESOME PASTIME ONE STEP FURTHER...

NO ONE'S AROUND THIS OLD, DESERTED CEMETERY AND THIS CARVED TOMBSTONE IS ONE OF THE MISSING ITEMS FROM MY COLLECTION--I HAVE NO TOMBSTONE WITH AN INSCRIPTION ABOUT A WIFE MURDERER!

THERE! IT'S MINE! MAY THE KILLER'S CORPSE REST IN PEACE... BUT HIS GRAVESTONE RESTS IN MY HOUSE FROM NOW ON!

RETURNING TO HIS HOUSE, JAVITT RODMAN UNLOCKS HIS BACK ROOM AND GAZES AT HIS COLLECTION...
UNRIVALED! UNMATCHED! NO ONE CAN BOAST A ROOMFUL OF TOMBSTONES LIKE MINE!--AND WHAT PLEASANT READING FOR A STORMY NIGHT! BUT THE BEST PART OF MY HOBBY IS THAT THE DEAD CAN'T PROTEST!

A FEW DAYS LATER, AS RODMAN DRIVES DOWN A SEEMINGLY UNUSED BACK ROAD...
THAT'S STRANGE! WHAT AN ODD PLACE FOR SUCH A MAGNIFICENT MAUSOLEUM!

THERE'S A TOMBSTONE BY THE SIDE OF THE MAUSOLEUM AND IT LOOKS FROM HERE LIKE A PRIZE ITEM FOR MY COLLECTION!
RODMAN
JAVITT RODMAN

HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHO ARE YOU?
HOW I KNOW YOUR NAME OR WHAT I AM MATTERS NOT! BUT HEED MY WARNING--- NEVER ENTER HERE!

BUT THE STRANGE WARNING ONLY SERVES TO EXCITE JAVITT RODMAN'S MORBID CURIOUSITY, AND THAT NIGHT, AS A PALE MOON SILVERS THE SILENT BURIAL TOMB...
THE CARETAKER'S GONE! NOW'S MY CHANCE TO READ THE INSCRIPTION ON THAT TABLET AND IF IT'S WORTHWHILE TO TAKE IT WITH ME!

IT'S M-MY NAME! MY BIRTHDATE. BUT WHOM DID I MEET HERE?
JAVITT RODMAN BORN

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE THAT MY NAME SHOULD BE ON THAT TABLET... WHATEVER SECRET THERE IS TO THIS LURID PLACE MUST BE INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM! MAYBE I CAN BREAK THE LOCK!

WITH GRIM DETERMINATION, HE TWISTS THE METAL RAKE, AND SUDDENLY...
THERE! IT'S BROKEN! NOW TO SEE WHAT'S BEYOND THESE DOORS!

WITH A MENACING SCREECH, THE HEAVY MARBLE DOORS ARE PULLED OPEN, AND A DARK, SHADOWY FORM FLUTTERS BY...
A BAT! BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT'S THE ONLY LIVING THING IN THIS SILENT TOMB!

FIVE COFFINS, BUT ONE IS OPEN AND EMPTY!

And SUDDENLY, BEHIND THE INTRUDER, A GREEN, MOULDERING HAND OF PUTRESCENT FLESH PUSHES BACK A COFFIN COVER...

WELCOME, JAVITT RODMAN! WE HAVE LONG BEEN EXPECTING YOU!
YES, AFTER ALL, YOU ARE ONE OF US!

N-NO! YOU'RE DEAD! KEEP AWAY FROM ME! WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON! NOTHING!
BUT WE DO -- WE ARE ALL VIOLATERS OF GRAVES!

WE UNBURIED THE DEAD WHILE WE WERE THE LIVING AND STOLE WHAT WE WANTED! YOU HAVE ROBBED THE DEAD OF THEIR ONLY IDENTITY AFTER DEATH -- THEIR TOMBSTONES!
NO! NO!
AND TONIGHT, YOU HAVE OPENED THE DOOR FOR US! THERE IS A GRAVEYARD NEAR -- COME! THERE IS GHOULISH WORK TO BE DONE!

BUT THE CLAMMY ROTTING HANDS OF THE LIVING DEAD TIGHTEN AROUND JAVITT RODMAN, AND HE IS FORCED ALONG TO A NEARBY CEMETERY...
HERE, JAVITT... TROPHIES FOR ALL OF US! YOU MAY HAVE YOUR PICK OF THE TOMBSTONES!
-- WHILE WE LOOT THE GRAVES!

AND AS JAVITT RODMAN STARES IN HORROR, THE FANTASTIC CREATURES HE RELEASED, BEGIN THEIR SORDID WORK...
AH! THE LIVING ARE SENTIMENTAL FOOLS! THEY ALWAYS BURY THEIR DEAD WITH RINGS ON -- GOLDEN RINGS!

AND BY ANOTHER UNEARTHED COFFIN, A PAIR OF SNIPPING SCISSORS BEGIN THEIR LOATHFUL TASK...
HAIR... I ALWAYS GET A GOOD PRICE FROM THE WIGMAKERS FOR THESE STOLEN LOCKS!

AND WITH AN EERIE, CREAKING SOUND A THIRD COFFIN IS PRIED OPEN...
COSTLY WINDING SHEETS ALWAYS BROUGHT A HIGH SUM AND THE DEAD ARE NEVER COLD... WE KNOW! AND SO SHALL YOU!
NO! I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! I WON'T STAY WITH YOU!

BUT STRUGGLE IS USELESS, AND RODMAN IS DRAGGED BACK INTO THE MAUSOLEUM...
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
COME BACK TO THE COFFIN WITH US! ONE IS EMPTY... WAITING FOR YOU! EACH NIGHT YOU CAN JOIN OUR GHOULISH RAIDS!

IN WILD DESPERATION, JANITT RODMAN TRIES TO FREE HIMSELF, BUT HE IS HELD IN A DEATH GRIP...
WHY STRUGGLE? YOU ARE LIKE US! JOIN US!
WHERE'S THE CARETAKER? IF HE'D ONLY COME...HE'D HELP ME NOW!

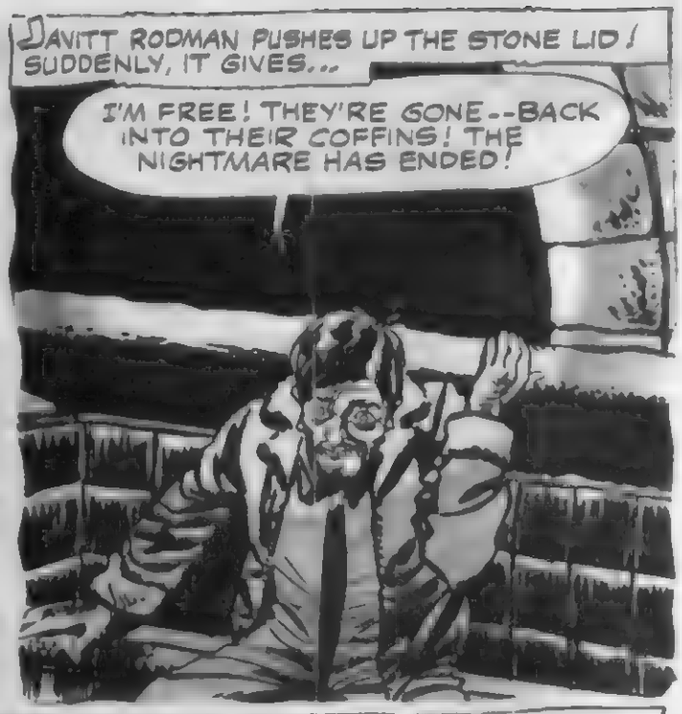
THE "CARETAKER" WOULD HELP HIM! FOOL! DON'T YOU KNOW WHO HE IS?
HE IS YOUR ENEMY AND OUR ENEMY! WE ALL HAVE VIOLATED HIS KINGDOM!

NO! STOP! I'M NOT DEAD LIKE YOU! I WANT TO LIVE!
THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM HERE! WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS! JOIN US! THIS COFFIN IS YOURS!

NO! IN THE NAME OF MERCY! --STOP!
WE HAVE SHOWN NO MERCY TO THE DEAD! WHY SHOULD WE SHOW IT TO THE LIVING?

And AS THE TERRIFIED GRAVE-THIEF IS SHOVED DOWN INTO THE COLD, STONE COFFIN, THE HEAVY LID IS PRESSED RELENTLESSLY DOWN...
CAN'T PUSH IT OFF... THERE'LL BE NO AIR IN HERE--- I'LL SUFFOCATE!

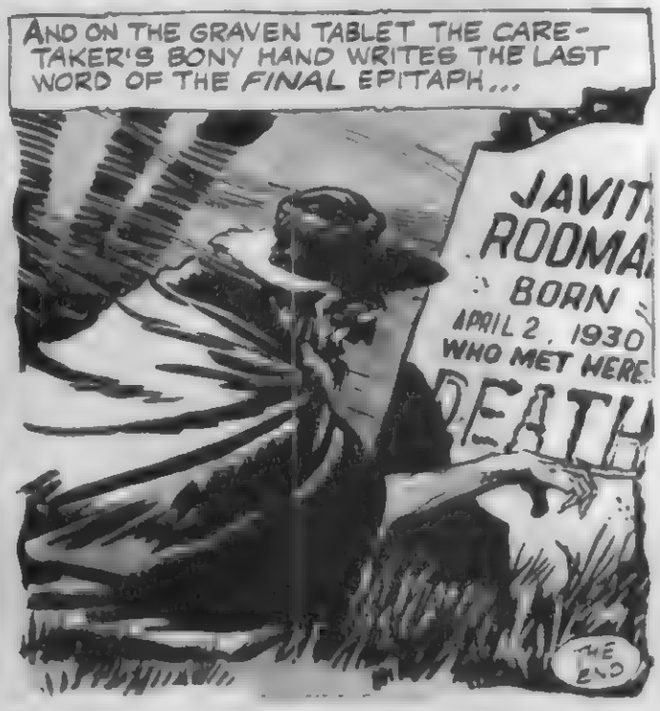
BUT SUDDENLY, THE FIRST RAY OF DAWNING SUNLIGHT STREAKS INTO THE DANK MAUSOLEUM AND THE DECAYING CORPSES SINK INTO THEIR COFFINS...


JAVITT RODMAN PUSHES UP THE STONE LID! SUDDENLY, IT GIVES...
I'M FREE! THEY'RE GONE--BACK INTO THEIR COFFINS! THE NIGHTMARE HAS ENDED!

BUT ONCE OUTSIDE, JAVITT RODMAN SEES THE SINISTER APPROACH OF THE CARETAKER...
NO ONE WILL KEEP ME HERE NOW! I'LL SMASH MY WAY OUT WITH THIS RAKE! NO DECREPIT CARETAKER CAN STOP ME!
WAIT, JAVITT RODMAN! DESPITE MY WARNING YOU CAME! NOW YOU SHALL STAY!

WITH VICIOUS FORCE, JAVITT SLASHES AGAIN AND AGAIN AT THE SHADOWY FIGURE...
I--I CAN'T HARM HIM!... THE RAKE GOES RIGHT THROUGH HIM!
CRACK!

And SUDDENLY THE CARETAKER'S HAND MAKES A SWEEPING MOTION, AS JAVITT RODMAN SINKS TO THE GROUND...
YOU HAVE VIOLATED MY REALM TOO MANY TIMES! THIS TOMBSTONE YOU SHALL NOT STEAL!


AND ON THE GRAVEN TABLET THE CARETAKER'S BONY HAND WRITES THE LAST WORD OF THE FINAL EPITAPH...
JAVIT
RODMA
BORN
APRIL 2, 1930
WHO MET HERE
DEATH
THE END

DEMON

IN THE DIM, LOST BEGINNING OF THE WORLD THERE LIVED SUCH HORRORS AS TODAY EXIST ONLY IN NIGHTMARES! TERRIBLE GIANT BRUTES WHO ROAMED THE PRE-HISTORIC SWAMPS, DEVOURING EACH OTHER, RENDING WITH CRUEL JAWS ANYTHING THAT DARED TO STAND AGAINST THEM! THEN THE WORLD CHANGED AND THE AWFUL BEASTS DIED OUT! TOTAL EXTINCTION WAS THEIR FATE--SO THE SCIENTISTS TOLD US! BUT ONE THING DID NOT DIE! ONE SMALL **EGG--THE HORROR THAT HATCHED A**

IT MAY HAVE STARTED LIKE THIS--TWO GROTESQUE CREATURES OF THAT WEIRD TWILIGHT WORLD LOCKED IN A FIERCE BATTLE TO THE DEATH! A FEMALE PROTECTS HER EGGS FROM A HUNGRY ENEMY...

BOTH OF THE BRUTES GASP OUT THEIR LIVES IN THE SLIME! THE EGGS, LEFT UNTENDED, DIE OR ARE EATEN BY THE OTHER DENIZENS OF THE PRIMEVAL WILDERNESS! ALL EXCEPT **ONE** EGG, WHICH SOMEHOW ESCAPES...

NOW EONS PASS AND THE ICE COMES, THEN SLOWLY RECEDES! THE EGG, DORMANT, PROTECTED THROUGH THE CENTURIES BY A CASING OF SWAMP MUD, IS FOUND BY MEN AT LAST...

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, SMITH? A DINOSAUR EGG?

NO, TOO SMALL! BUT IT'S OLD! VERY AMAZING FIND, SIR! MIGHT BE A BRONTOSAURUS!

THE EGG ENDS UP IN A MUSEUM IN A LARGE CITY..

WOW! HOW'D YOU LIKE TO HAVE THAT WITH YOUR HAM FOR BREAKFAST?

HEY, KIDS, COME AND LOOK AT THE BIG EGG! IS IT A WHOPPER!

WILBUR-- THE VERY IDEA!

MONTHS PASS AND BITTER WEATHER GRIPS THE CITY! ONE NIGHT THE MUSEUM WATCHMAN TURNS UP THE THERMOSTAT...

NEVER TURNED IT UP SO HIGH BEFORE, BUT IT'S BELOW ZERO OUT TONIGHT! GOT TO KEEP THIS PLACE WARM!

AN HOUR PASSES AND FROM THE EGG THERE COMES A STRANGE SOUND! A SINISTER, STEALTHY, **CRACKING** SOUND! THEN SUDDENLY...

CRACK

CRACK

AND A **THING** IS BORN! TWISTED, GROTESQUE, HORRIBLE, ITS BODY SOMEHOW WARPED BY THE CENTURIES INTO SOMETHING HALF BEAST, HALF HUMAN...

ARRR! GUUUU-- RRRR!

OVUM PREHIST. FOUND AT MT. BOGAR

STILL WET FROM THE EGG, THE MONSTER FROM ANOTHER TIME AND ANOTHER WORLD PROWLS THE DARK CORRIDORS OF THE MUSEUM! ITS BRAIN IS TINY, HELPLESS, BUT INSTINCT RULES IT AND IT IS HUNGRY...

RRRRRRRR! AWGG!

THEN IT SEES THE PREY AND STRIKES WITH A FURY OUT OF THE AGES! WITH SLAVERING JAWS AND CRUEL TALONS IT TEARS THE WATCHMAN TO PIECES..

AAHHH!

EEEEEE

RRRR-- GRRRR!

IT'S IMMEDIATE HUNGER IS APPEASED, BUT IN THE STUNTED BRAIN OF THE BEAST FROM BEYOND THERE IS STILL A VAGUE YEARNING! IT HEADS FOR A GRAVEYARD...

ARRR-GUUU!

THE ANCESTORS OF THE BRUTE WERE **CARRION** EATERS! NOW, SOMEHOW, IT WANTS THE SAME FOOD! OLD BONES, DECAYING FLESH! THAT IS THE TRUE FOOD OF THIS HORROR...

ABNER HOKI

GRRRR-OWRRRRR-

AND SO A CARETAKER FINDS IT, MUNCHING CONTENTEDLY ON AN OLD BONE...

ARRGG?

YIIEEEEE! W-WHAT IS IT! EATING B-BONES TEARING UP THE GRAVES! EATING B-BODIES, TOO! I GOT TO CALL THE COPS!

I TELL YA I SAW IT! WITH MY OWN EYES! NO, I AIN'T BEEN DRINKING, I TELL YA! SOME KIND OF A TERRIBLE ANIMAL, TEARING UP ALL THE GRAVES! SORT OF LIKE A DRAGON!

YOU BETTER GO SLEEP IT OFF!

THE BRUTE, SENSING DANGER TO ITSELF, FOLLOWS THE CARETAKER! NOW, WITH RED GAPING JAWS...

IT'S AFTER ME! **HELP!** OHHHH! **HELP ME!** IT'S GOING TO KILL ME! **YOWWWW!**

ARRRR!

WHAT IS IT, PETE? SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY BEING MURDERED, EVEN OVER THE PHONE!

I THOUGHT IT WAS A DRUNK-- NOW I AIN'T SO SURE! WE BETTER GO TAKE A LOOK!

HELP! OWWW!

NOW THE HOURS OF THE BRUTE THING ARE NUMBERED, BUT IT DOES NOT KNOW OR CARE! IT VANISHES INTO THE NIGHT AS THE POLICE CLOSE IN ON THE GRAVEYARD AND FIND THE DISMEMBERED BODY OF THE WATCHMAN...

UGH! I'VE SEEN BODIES BEFORE, BUT **THAT** ONE! I FEEL SICK!

ME TOO! BUT **WHAT** COULD DO **THAT** TO A MAN?

POLICE

BUT THE BEAST FROM YESTERDAY IS LOOSE NOW, SPREADING TERROR IN THE CITY, BUSY EXPLORING THE TEEMING METROPOLIS FULL OF PUNY CREATURES WHICH IT CANNOT UNDERSTAND, BUT INSTINCTIVELY HOLDS IN CONTEMPT...
ARRRRRRR-GRORRRR-
UNTIL AT LAST IT PEERS INTO A WINDOW AND SEES ONE OF THE CREATURES! IT IS NO LONGER HUNGRY, BUT HERE IS SOMETHING ON WHICH TO VENT ITS FEAR AND RAGE...
WONDER WHAT ALL THE EXCITEMENT IS ABOUT? I HEAR SIRENS!
SUDDENLY THE BRUTE CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW AS IF IT WERE PAPER...
EEEEEEEE-
GOWRRRRRRR-
LATER, WITH ITS FEAR-CRAZED VICTIM, IT IS TRACKED DOWN AND PINPOINTED BY THE SPOTLIGHTS OF THE BAFFLED POLICE...
DON'T HARM THAT GIRL, WHATEVER YOU ARE! LET HER GO! SURRENDER YOURSELF!
DON'T BE A DOPE, McCANN! THAT THING CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU!
HOWLING WITH RAGE, GNASHING ITS TEETH AT ITS TORMENTORS, THE BRUTE-BEAST HURLS THE HELPLESS GIRL AT THE GAPING CROWD...
MY HEAVENS! THAT POOR GIRL...
EEEEEEE-
RRRRRRRR-
WATCH OUT! GET BACK!
HORRIBLE!
AN ENRAGED COP POURS FUTILE BULLETS AFTER THE FLEEING MONSTER, BUT TOO LATE! IT DISAPPEARS ONCE MORE INTO THE GLOOM...
THAT SLIMY MURDERING THING FROM HADES! BULLETS DON'T EVEN BOTHER IT!
CALL AN AMBULANCE, SOMEBODY! TAKE THIS BODY TO THE MORGUE!

WITH A DEEP AND INSTINCTIVE CUNNING THE BRUTE NOW MAKES FOR A LARGE SWAMP NOT FAR OUTSIDE THE CITY! IT KNOWS IT IS IN DANGER, AND THAT IN THE WARM MARSHLAND IT WILL FIND A HIDING PLACE...

RRRGGG! RRRRRR!

SURE ENOUGH, AS IT SINKS WITH A CONTENTED GRUNT INTO THE SLIME OF THE MARSH, IT FEELS THAT IT HAS COME HOME AGAIN! IT IS AS THOUGH THE MILLIONS OF YEARS HAVE BEEN SLOUGHED AWAY! NOW THE THING WAITS FOR ITS PURSUERS...

THESE TRACKS LEAD RIGHT INTO THE SWAMP!

UGH--SOME TRACKS!

WWWFFF! ORRRRGG!

SUDDENLY...

LOOK AT PRINCE! HE'S ON TO SOMETHING! LOOK AT HIM GO! THAT'S THE BOY, GO GET IT!

I AIN'T SO SURE I WANT TO SEE IT, WHATEVER IT IS! THIS WHOLE THING IS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A HORROR MOVIE!

BUT THE THING IS WAITING...

YIIIIIPPPPP! ROWWWWW!

AAAAARRRRRR

AFTER THE POLICE FIND THE MANGLED BODY OF THE DOG...

BRRR! DID YOU EVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE IT! TORN IN A MILLION PIECES!

I CAN STILL HEAR THAT POOR DOG HOWLING! MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE!

SUDDENLY, STRIKING FROM BEHIND, WITH A CRUEL AND FIERCE JOY...

RRRR

GRRRR

YOWWW! BLUB--GLUB!

GAAAAA!

HOURS PASS WHILE THE THING RANGES THE SWAMP, BLOODILY FRUSTRATING EVERY EFFORT TO DESTROY IT! AFTER TEN MEN HAVE DIED HORRIBLY THE NATIONAL GUARD IS CALLED OUT...

EASY DOES IT, BOYS! WE WANT TO BLOW THAT MONSTER UP, NOT OURSELVES!

HURRY UP, YOU MEN! AT LAST REPORT IT WAS HEADING THIS WAY!

NOW SOMETHING WHISPERS IN THE BRAIN OF THE BEAST AND IT COMES TO THE SURFACE, EMERGING FROM THE SLIME TO FIGHT ITS LAST...

YAAAAA! LOOK! THERE IT IS!

B-BUT WHAT IS IT?

WITH A TERRIBLE ROAR THE SLIME COVERED BRUTE CHARGES THE FRIGHTENED GUARDSMEN...

B-BULLETS WON'T STOP IT!

YAWRRRRR

LEMME OUT OF THIS!

WON'T ANYTHING STOP IT?

A TRAP WAS SET, BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT...

HELP! OWWW!

YAAAAA!

S-SOMETHING WENT WRONG! THE CHARGE WON'T FIRE!

BUT THE SPARK TAKES AT LAST, TRAVELING ALONG THE DAMP WIRE TO WHERE THE THING IS STILL TEARING AND RENDING AND KILLING...

YARRRRRR!

BLAM!

LATER...

DEAD AT LAST! BUT WHAT ON EARTH WAS IT, SIR?

I DON'T KNOW! I DOUBT IF ANYONE DOES KNOW! ANYWAY IT'S OVER NOW!

OVER? HOW THE DEAD BRUTE WOULD LAUGH IF IT COULD! IT HAS DONE ITS WORK--- BECAUSE IT WAS A FEMALE --AND SOMEWHERE IN THE SWAMP IS---ANOTHER EGG!!!

END

IT STARTED WITH A SIMPLE LITTLE QUARREL AND ENDED IN FEAR AND HORROR! THE OLD HOUSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN WAITING TO POUNCE, LIKE SOME PREHISTORIC MONSTER, ON THE ILL-FATED COUPLE! SO IF IT'S THRILLS AND CHILLS YOU WANT, IF YOUR BLOOD NEEDS CURDLING, READ ON! IF YOU DARE! FOR THIS IS THE STORY OF **THE MURDEROUS JOKE...**

Night of TERROR

SUE AND JOHN TRENT ARE HAVING A VIOLENT QUARREL...

I HATE YOU! I REALLY DO! YOU'RE STUBBORN AND OBSTINATE AND, OH, I JUST SIMPLY HATE YOU!

SO! YOU'RE NO BARGAIN, YOU KNOW! WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME TO MOTHER AS YOU'RE ALWAYS THREATENING TO DO!

SO A FEW MINUTES LATER...

MOTHER? THIS IS SUE! I'VE HAD A QUARREL WITH JOHN! I HATE HIM! AND I'M COMING FOR A VISIT WITH YOU!

SWELL WITH ME! I'LL EVEN DRIVE YOU THERE! GO PACK YOUR THINGS!

BUT WHEN SUE GOES UP TO PACK, JOHN GETS AN IDEA OF HIS OWN AND CALLS A FRIEND...
HELLO! MORRIS? THIS IS JOHN TRENT! SAY, I WANT YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR! I'VE HAD A FIGHT WITH SUE AND I WANT TO TEACH HER A LESSON! YOU KNOW THAT OLD HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE COLD SPRING ROAD? WELL, LISTEN...

HAH-HAH! SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA, JOHN! YES, I'LL DO IT, GLAD TO! HAH-HAH! WE'LL REALLY GIVE HER A GOOD SCARE! OKAY, THEN! I'LL SEE YOU THERE!

HAH-HAH! JOHN SURE HAS GOT A SENSE OF HUMOR! AND THIS WILL MAKE HIM LOOK LIKE A HERO IN SUE'S EYES, KEEP HER FROM LOSING HIM! NOW IF I CAN JUST BE A CONVINCING GHOST!

SO, LATER THAT SAME NIGHT, AS JOHN TRENT DRIVES HIS WIFE TO HER MOTHER'S HOUSE...
JOHN! WHY ARE WE GOING THIS WAY? YOU'VE NEVER TAKEN THIS ROAD BEFORE!
HAH! IT'S A SHORT CUT, THAT'S WHY! I WANT TO GET RID OF YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

BUT, ACCORDING TO PLAN--JOHN FINDS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CAR...
NOW WHAT? BLAST IT, ANYWAY! LISTEN TO HER SPUTTER! MUST BE THAT NEW IGNITION COIL! I NEVER DID LIKE THE WAY IT WORKED!
THIS IS FINE! A MILLION MILES FROM NOWHERE AND THE CAR STALLS!

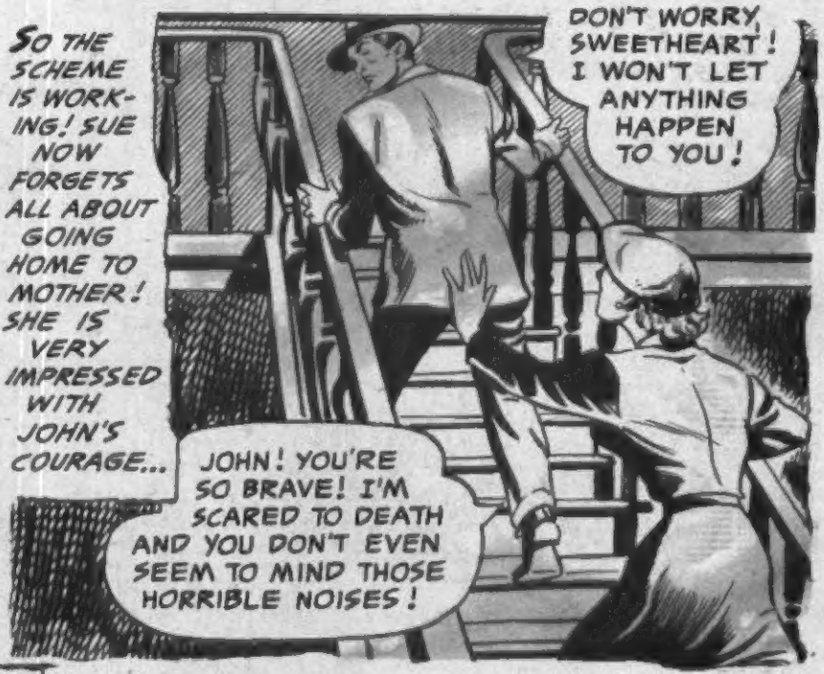
THE CAR GLIDES TO A HALT JUST BEFORE A DESERTED OLD MANSION THAT HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING HAUNTED...
COME ON, IT'S STARTING TO RAIN! WE CAN TAKE COVER IN HERE UNTIL I FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO!
I D-DON'T KNOW! YOU KNOW THE STORIES ABOUT THIS OLD HOUSE! WASN'T THERE A MURDER HERE OR SOMETHING?

SO, CARRYING OUT HIS PLAN TO TEACH SUE A LESSON, JOHN TRENT PUSHES OPEN THE CREAKING DOOR...
YES, I THINK A MURDER WAS COMMITTED HERE! SO WHAT? YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?
I--I DON'T KNOW! I JUST KNOW THAT I DON'T LIKE IT HERE!

SUDDENLY...
WHOOOOEEEEE!
JOHN! LISTEN! W-WHAT WAS THAT?
HUH! I DON'T KNOW...

AND, AS HE HAD EXPECTED, HIS WIFE LEAPS INTO HIS ARMS, IN FEAR...
HAH-HAH! MORRIS IS DOING A FINE JOB! THAT (CHUCKLE) GROAN SOUNDED JUST LIKE A REAL GHOST MIGHT SOUND!
DON'T WORRY, PROBABLY ONLY THE WIND!
HOW COULD THAT HORRIBLE SOUND BE THE WIND? THERE ISN'T ANY WIND!

JOHN! WHERE ARE YOU GOING! DON'T YOU DARE LEAVE ME ALONE!
I'M GOING UPSTAIRS AND SEE IF IT REALLY IS A GHOST! I'M NOT AFRAID, EVEN IF YOU ARE! BUT I'M CURIOUS!
OHHHHHHHHH!

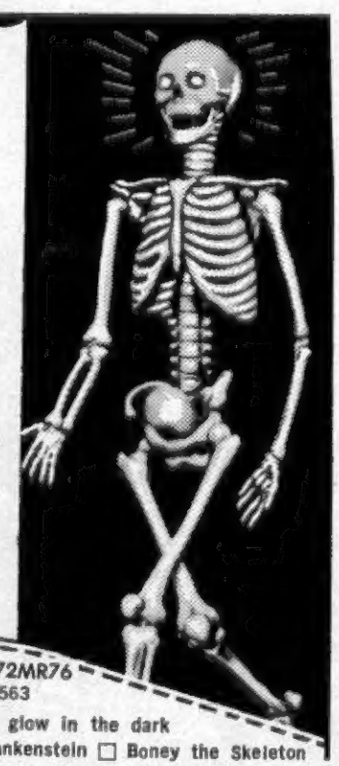

SO THE SCHEME IS WORKING! SUE NOW FORGETS ALL ABOUT GOING HOME TO MOTHER! SHE IS VERY IMPRESSED WITH JOHN'S COURAGE...
DON'T WORRY, SWEETHEART! I WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU!
JOHN! YOU'RE SO BRAVE! I'M SCARED TO DEATH AND YOU DON'T EVEN SEEM TO MIND THOSE HORRIBLE NOISES!

BUT, AS THEY REACH THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, JOHN GETS A VERY NASTY SHOCK...
L--LOOK! A MAN! HIS LEGS ARE STICKING OUT OF THAT DOOR! HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S D-DEAD!
HUH! Y-YES! HE DOES LOOK DEAD!
GREAT SCOTT! I DIDN'T COUNT ON THIS!

AND THE MAN IS DEAD! WORSE, THE BODY IS THAT OF MORRIS, JOHN'S FRIEND..
EEEEEEEK! JOHN! T-THAT'S MORRIS SLATTERY! B-BUT HOW..
I DON'T KNOW! B-BUT IT SURE ENOUGH IS MORRIS! AND HE'S VERY DEAD!

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

MONSTER S-I-Z-E MONSTERS



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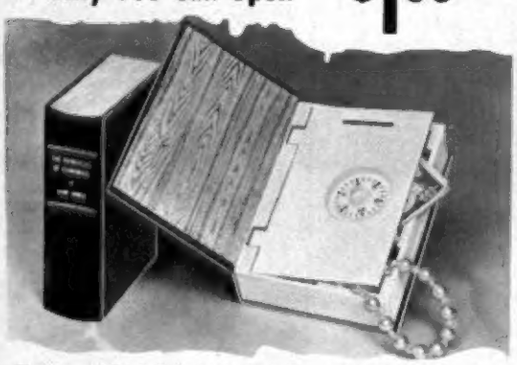

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AND GOES CRASHING DOWN, AS A HORRIBLE SCREAM RINGS OUT FROM THE ROOM, ABOVE...
OH, NO, PLEASE-- GAAAAAA!
AHHHHHH!
THERE IS A SNAPPING SOUND, AS THE WOMAN'S FRAGILE NECK IS BROKEN IN TWO...
OHH--MY HEAD! THE BLOOD--- YAAAAAA!
HEH-HEH--THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY, DID YOU!
AND THEN A TERRIBLE SILENCE DESCENDS ON THE OLD HOUSE! IN THE GORY ROOM ABOVE...
HEE-HEE-- DEAD AS A DOORNAIL! CHOPPED HIM UP JUST LIKE THE OTHERS! NOW I'LL LOOK AROUND FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO KILL! AND PEOPLE ALL (CHUCKLE) THINK I'M CRAZY!
BUT THERE IS A SUDDEN WAIL OF SIRENS IN THE NIGHT, AND OUTSIDE...
HO-HO--THE POLICE AFTER ME AGAIN! THEY ALWAYS KNOW WHERE TO LOOK, CURSE THEM!
CAREFUL NOW, BOYS! YOU KNOW HOW CRAZY SHE IS!
AND...
EASY DOES IT, GRANNY!
GIVE ME THAT AXE! THERE'S A NICE OLD LADY!
TAKE YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF ME! I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THAT PLACE!
COME ALONG NOW--YOU KNOW YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE ASYLUM!
LATER, AFTER THE BODIES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE MORGUE-- AND THE OLD WOMAN RETURNED TO THE LUNATIC ASYLUM...
TRY TO FIGURE THAT ONE, HUH? WHAT ON EARTH WERE THOSE PEOPLE DOING IN THAT OLD HOUSE?
WE'LL NEVER KNOW! BUT THE OLD LADY, SHE'S DIFFERENT! SHE MAKES A HABIT OF GOING TO THAT HOUSE! EVERY TIME SHE ESCAPES FROM THE ASYLUM, SHE GOES THERE!
SHE MURDERED HER HUSBAND THERE YEARS AGO, THEN WENT INSANE! NOW SHE THINKS HER HUSBAND IS STILL ALIVE, AND LIVING IN THAT HOUSE! SHE ALWAYS GOES BACK TO KILL HIM! IF OTHER PEOPLE GET IN THE WAY--WELL, YOU KNOW!
POLICE 481
The End